

LESSONS IN ENGLISH

TENNYSON

SELECTIONS.

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# SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON

EDITED WITH NOTES,

BY

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*"Roam on! The light we sought is shining still."*

*Matthew Arnold's THYRSIS*

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“But my delight in going over Homer and Virgil with the boys makes me think what a treat it must be to teach Shakespeare to a good class of young Greeks in regenerate Athens ; to dwell upon line by line, and word by word, in the way that nothing but a translation lesson ever will enable one to do ; and so to get all his pictures and thoughts leisurely into his mind, till I verily think one would after a time give out light in the dark, after having been steeped as it were in such an atmosphere of brilliance. And how could this ever be done without having the process of construing, as the grosser medium through which alone all the beauty can be transmitted, *because else we travel too fast*, and more than half of it escapes us.”

—ARNOLD OF RUGBY.



## PREFACE.

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The selection of the poems in this book is the only part of it for which the editor is not responsible. Some of the poems seem to us admirably suited to their purpose of conveying to a beginner an adequate general idea of the work of Tennyson, but it does not seem certain that the real purpose of such selections has been constantly kept in view in the choosing.

There are usually two faults found with a hand-book of this kind; one is that the notes are too scanty, the other that they are too full. Those who reflect on the wide constituency for which these books are prepared will, of course, be very slow to pass any general verdict on this question. The present writer has kept in view the various schools from north to south, and east to west, of which he has had knowledge, as well as that large number of candidates who annually appear not attached to any school but self-prepared, and has endeavoured to divide their labour with all who need assistance.

The sole object of this book is to furnish young students in Ontario and Manitoba such an introduction to Tennyson as will make them earnest readers of that poet for life. In no instance has the desire to prepare students for certain examinations been permitted to degrade the tone of the work; the triumph of the teacher of literature is to make many earnest readers of good books, not to "pass" many candidates: yet it so happens that as a rule if he strives for the first reward the second is added.

As nothing could exceed the kindness and favour with which my edition of Wordsworth was received by my colleagues two

years ago, and as I have endeavoured to follow the general lines of treatment therein made use of, I hope that this book may be received as indulgently; and that it may in some degree aid in what is in this country a really great and useful work, however crudely it may as yet be possible to accomplish it, a diffusion of a sincere and unpretentious love of the best books. No one I am sure feels more deeply how much shallowness, formality, pedantry, and ostentation, are found in connection with the teaching of poetry; yet I am as deeply convinced of the reality of its propagation of much that is sweet and true, beautiful, inspiring and consoling.

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“ And amongst us one,  
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne.”

—THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY.



## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE RELATION OF TENNYSON'S LIFE TO HIS WORKS.

“ With the approaching production of *Becket*, and the publication of *Akbar's Dream* it seemed as though the winter of 1892 would be a memorable season in Tennyson's life. But for him the winter was never to come.

The rumours of these new movements were but fresh in our midst when a graver report centred our attention upon Aldworth. Tennyson was ill. An attack of influenza had become complicated by gout, and his condition was considered serious. So wrapped in peace and secrecy was the home at Haslemere that the Laureate had been ill for five days before the news reached the ears of the neighbouring villagers. On Monday, October the third, it was known in London that Tennyson was sinking ; and, though he rallied for one night, there was never any real accession of strength : the end was merely a question of time. By Wednesday night the doctors had given up hope ; and very peacefully and at ease, his room bathed in a flood of moonlight, he passed away about half-past one on the morning of Thursday, October the sixth.” “ His family,” adds Mr. Waugh, “ were about him at his death.” Shortly before the last the poet asked for his favorite copy of Shakespeare ; turned to the dirge over Fidele in *Cymbeline*, and seemed to be reflecting upon its sacred lines.\*

It was felt on both sides of the Atlantic that the career of another great Englishman had become a matter of history.

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\* Harper's Monthly, Jan. '93, page 312.

People of nearly all classes were impressed with a sense of loss and of the solemnity of death ; but there was withal a sense of rejoicing that a grand and poetical life had attained a quiet consummation in the fulness of years and of earthly renown.

The burial of the Poet-Laureate in Westminster Abbey was simple, grand, and solemn. Many gifted people were present to say farewell to the mortal vesture of that immortal spirit who had passed beyond these voices to find replies to problems and speculations which had disturbed him more than any other of the sons of men.

Tennyson was eighty-three years and two months of age when he died.

He was born in the tiny village of Somersby in Lincolnshire on the sixth of August, 1809. His father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, LL.D., and his mother, the daughter of the Rev. Stephen Fytche, Vicar of Louth, lived in the Rectory of Somersby. They had a family of twelve children, seven boys and five girls.

The father was a man of taste and learning, and of fine athletic frame ; the mother was sweet, tender, and refined ; so well-known for pity and gentleness that it is related that the village roughs would beat dogs near her windows in order to be bought off.

Nothing is more difficult than to trace with any accuracy the qualities of a man to their origin in inherited tendencies, youthful environments, and the circumstances, influences, and opportunities, of the years of active life. That the native characteristics and early training of the Tennysons had much to do with

their mature characters is shown to some extent by family likeness observable in Frederick, Charles, and Alfred ; as boys they were all filled with literary ambition, and as men they all achieved distinction as poets ; though the youngest alone was marked by what we call genius.

Somersby rectory was an old white mansion on the slope of a hill, where "the winding lanes are shadowed by tall ashes and elms, and two brooks meet at the bottom of the glebe field." It is in a charming picturesque country near, but not in, the famous fen region of Lincolnshire. The Tennyson family was of that refined and noble type common in the upper middle class in England ; the children were handsome, intellectual, refined, and imaginative ; the home was beautiful, and the home-life sweet and dignified. The children grew up in an atmosphere of good books, flowers, gentle unselfish manners, liberal and beautiful purity of morals ; and before they went to school had nearly all that good schools can give. Pretty anecdotes are told which enable us to realize the nature of this family life quite vividly : "One Sunday when all the elders of the party were going into church the child [Alfred] was left alone. Charles gave him a subject—the flowers in the garden—and when he came back from church little Alfred brought the slate to his brother all covered with written lines of blank verse." Charles read the verses and said, "Yes, you can write." These were Tennyson's first verses.

There is a glimpse of him at five, overheard, as he was swept along a garden-walk by a summer-wind, chanting to himself, "I hear a voice that is speaking in the wind."

Tennyson got his first school lessons at Cadney's village school, but at the Christmas after he was six years old, he was sent to the Grammar School in the neighbouring town of Louth. Here he seems to have learned very little—the school was dull and stupid and had little influence upon his mind—but this may have been a blessing in disguise.

In 1820 George the Fourth was crowned, and the school children of Louth had a procession in his honour, in which the Tennyson boys “decked out in rosettes” are reported by the good women of the village to have made a pleasing figure.

Between 1820 and 1828 Alfred Tennyson remained at home with his father and brothers, reading, studying, writing verses, rambling through country lanes, discovering the fens and the sea, and preparing himself for the university and for life. Between eleven and nineteen Tennyson had little or no companionship beyond his own relatives. He studied music at Horncastle; studied the classics with a Roman Catholic priest, an experience likely to make him feel a reverent familiarity with Latin; learned to love nature; learned, in a word, much that would make him a man and a scholar; but failed to learn that homely democratic brotherliness which he might have got by mingling with boys of his own age at this plastic period of life.

Some of the simple anecdotes related by friends of Lord Tennyson throw a strong light upon his early characteristics. “One night, as he leaned from the window, he heard an owl hooting; and, with a faculty for imitation which was strong in him, he cried back to the bird. The poet’s “tu-whit, tu-whoo” was so natural that the owl flew to the window, and into the

room, where it was captured and kept for a long while as a pet." The love of onomatopœia, the refrain from the old ballad, the artificial naturalness deceiving nature herself, these are surely, and without afterwit, Tennyson in the promissory period.

Mrs. Ritchie tells how the news of Byron's death affected the household at the rectory: 'Byron is dead!' The whole world seemed full of the cry: and the boy crept away to think its meaning out alone, and to cut 'Byron is dead!' into the sandstone. This is Tennyson the author of the *In Memoriam*: the melancholy precipitated, glad to be precipitated, by any concrete cause; the morbid tendency to grief, the lachrymose appreciation of death, sorrow, poetry, distinction, solitude, passion; verily his biography is harmonious, consistent, a poetic unity.

In 1826, when Alfred Tennyson was fifteen, he and his brother Charles, being desirous of acquiring pocket-money, and, doubtless, any distinction that might accrue to them, published through Mr. Jackson, a bookseller of Louth, a collection of their poems entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, to which they had the good sense to preface, as a guard, 'Haec nos novimus esse nihil'; there were 102 poems, covering 228 pages.

These verses are very promising. They are marked by exaggerated sentiment, verbosity, bombastic imitation of passionate writers such as Byron, Scott, and Moore; but they certainly suggested that maturity of experience and thought would leave something worthy and even precious.

Alfred Tennyson went to Cambridge University in 1828, and in 1831 he left Cambridge without having finished his arts course.

When he went to Cambridge he got the reputation of being shy, proud, and unsociable. This of course was the natural result of his not having had the shyness taken out of him at a public school such as Eton or Rugby, and of his refined sensitiveness. "There is a story told of them [the brothers] that, starting for college with every intention of dining in Hall, they would often find their courage fail them when they saw the tables full and heard the buzz of conversation, and hurry back to their lodgings dinnerless." At Cambridge, however, the tall, shy, handsome, poetical boy of nineteen made friends of the best and most gifted undergraduates in Trinity. There was a society, a literary and debating club, called 'The Apostles,' confined to twelve members and comprising the brightest students. Tennyson became a member and met intimately Arthur Hallam, Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), Richard Chenevix Trench, F. D. Maurice, James Spedding, W. H. Thompson (afterwards master of Trinity), and others scarcely less gifted and promising. As an essayist or debater in this Club, Tennyson never distinguished himself; but they knew him as a poet, and it was generally understood among them that he was certain to distinguish himself.

In 1829 he won the Chancellor's medal at the Cambridge Commencement for a poem on the assigned subject "Timbuctoo." This work was so marked by command of language-imagination, originality of form, and general pleasing excellence, that it rose above the class of college amateur verse and was commented upon favorably by critics of some maturity and discernment.

After this he used to read original poems to his circle of in-



timate friends ; but he could never tolerate criticism, and it was understood that listeners should either praise his work or remain silent. However, he was intensely self-critical, and his objection to criticism was founded, probably, upon a dislike for having his spirits dashed by criticisms which he had foreseen and set aside. It is certain he was far in advance of his companions in all analytical criticism.

The year 1830 marks the real beginning of the public career of Tennyson as one of the English poets. It will be observed that in this year he was but twenty-one.

In the light of subsequent successes it is possible to overestimate the *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, of 1830. There is always a danger of afterwit in estimating the early achievements of men who have achieved fame also. It is perhaps, then, judicious to say that this volume contained *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, *The Poet*, and *The Poet's Mind* ; these are poems of which no critic can truly say they get their glory and loveliness from the reflection of better work done later.

In February, 1831, Tennyson left Cambridge, and in March his father died at Somersby.

At college, Tennyson's chief friend had been Arthur Hallam, a son of the great historian of the British Constitution. Hallam had visited with his friend at Somersby in vacation, and had become the accepted lover of his sister Emily. His sympathy with the family on the untimely death of the father was sincere and must have endeared him to them profoundly.

In October of 1832 Hallam went up to London to work at Law after spending the summer with the Tennysons at their

old home. During the winter following the friends met occasionally in London and Somersby.

In the spring of 1833 Hallam suffered from an attack of influenza. He had always been of delicate constitution; "a rapid determination of blood to the brain continually deprived him of physical power." In August his parents took him to the Continent for his health, "travelling on a wet day between Vienna and Pesth, he developed an intermittent fever, of which he died upon the fifteenth of September, 1833." On the third of the following January his remains were buried at Clevedon." On the tablet to his memory occur these simple words of parental love and sorrow: "Vale, dulcissime, vale dilectissime, desideratissime, requiescas in pace. Pater ac Mater hic posthac requiescamus tecum usque ad tubam." "Alas, my son, thou hast died in thy youth, by a timeless doom, woe is me!" groans Creon. But not alone were the parents plunged into sorrow inconsolable. Tennyson and his sister suffered a loss which to sterner and less finely organized minds must have been terrible and intolerable. Arthur Hallam himself introduced Shelley's beautiful *Adonais* to English readers—how well many of its lines express the feelings produced by his own death—the opening lines:

"I weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
Oh! weep for Adonais, though our tears  
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head;"

and the time came when the grief of Tennyson was echoed by the sublime and prophetic beauty of the concluding stanza:

“The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me ; my spirit’s bark is driven  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;  
The mossy earth and sphered skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar ;  
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the eternal are” :

though to the later poet the faith and devotion of a longer life gave greater calm and repose.

In 1832 Tennyson had published a new volume which had added greatly to his rising fame. It contained some poems which are still regarded as among the strongest and most melodious in the world ; *Ænone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Lotos Eaters*, and *A Dream of Fair Women*, are examples.

In some respects the poems of this volume were of very unequal merit—and in all respects the book was original and puzzling to the old-fashioned and conservative critics. The poet was highly praised for it, and severely censured and coarsely ridiculed. If he had not been sensitive, and morbidly sensitive, to criticism, he simply would not have been the artist he was, so it goes without saying that he was much hurt by the ill-judged and sometimes ignorant criticism poured upon his work. Because of his annoyance and disgust, and because of a mastering desire for perfection, he worked and improved quietly for ten years before publishing his next book. In 1842 he published two volumes, the first consisting mainly of earlier poems republished, the second consisting entirely of new work written during his long silence. Among the new poems were *The Morte d’Arthur*, *Ulysses*, *Sir Galahad*, *Lady Clare*, and

*Locksley Hall.* The two last did a great deal to make Tennyson a popular writer.

The success of these volumes was unquestioned, or nearly so. It became fashionable to praise and to quote the works of Tennyson, and many are said to have admired highly at this time poems which they had sneered at ten years before, and which had in some cases been republished without the slightest alteration. Dickens, Edgar Poe, Emerson, Carlyle, and many other eminent personages accepted Tennyson as a poet of unassailable renown. In 1845 the good and generous Wordsworth warmly declared, "Tennyson is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still greater things." In the same year some influential and enthusiastic friends applied to Sir Robert Peel on behalf of Tennyson for a pension. The great First Minister held views concerning poetry not unlike those of Hotspur when he exclaimed: "I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew, than one of these same metre ballad mongers." He had never heard of Tennyson. But on receiving from Monckton Milnes a copy of Tennyson's new volumes with *Ulysses* and *Locksley Hall* marked, he gracefully complied with the request and the young poet was richer by £200 a year.

Ambitious men have reason to feel despondent when they have no hostile critics. Though John Stuart Mill and Landor, Sterling, Thackeray, and a host of others, spoke of Tennyson's poems with enthusiasm, there were still a few who found much fault with his verses. In 1832 the able 'Christopher North' (Prof. Wilson) in *Blackwood's Magazine* had called the poems "drivel, and more dismal drivel, and even more dismal drivel,"

and had added, with a polished wit which would hardly pass muster to-day in a school debating-club (criticising *The Owl*) : "Alfred himself is the greatest owl ; all he wants is to be shot, stuffed, and stuck in a glass case, to be made immortal in a museum." In a moment of condescension he threw him a few scraps of praise. Tennyson could tolerate the crude and unsophisticated abuse, but the praise was too much for his temper ; he retorts :

" When I learnt from whom it came,  
I forgave you all the blame,  
Musty Christopher ;  
I could *not* forgive the praise,  
Fusty Christopher."

Similarly in 1845 Tennyson found a proof that he was succeeding, in a bitter attack by Lytton Bulwer, a writer of great brilliance and industry, but of a selfish and supercilious character. Sheridan Knowles had been a rival for the pension which Tennyson had achieved. In an anonymous poem, *The New Timon*, Lytton criticised Tennyson and his pension in the following bitter lines :—

‘ Let schoolmiss Alfred vent her chaste delight  
In darling little rooms so warm and bright,  
Chant "I'm a-weary " in infectious strain,  
And catch "the blue fly singing in the pane."  
Tho' praised by critics and admired by blues,  
Tho' Peel with pudding plump the puling muse,  
Tho' Theban taste the Saxon purse controls,  
And pensions Tennyson while starves a Knowles. . . ."

The "darling little rooms" is in allusion to a little poem describing his study.

"Schoolmiss Alfred" was sufficiently combative to reply to Lytton's satire in a little skit in *Punch* a few months later. Lytton had certainly exposed himself to a savage counter-thrust when he posed as Timon of Athens, for while Timon was cynical he was yet great and noble, but Lytton's cynicism was the snarl of envy and malice. The reply, which really gives us a valuable comment upon the powers which Tennyson held in abeyance, was as follows:—

We know him, out of Shakspeare's art,  
 And those fine curses which he spoke—  
 The Old Timon with his noble heart,  
 That strongly loathing, greatly broke.  
 So died the Old ; here comes the New ;  
 Regard him—a familiar face ;  
 I thought we knew him. What ! it's you,  
 The padded man that wears the stays ;  
 Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys  
 With dandy pathos when you wrote :  
 O Lion, you that made a noise,  
 And shook a mane *en papillotes*. . . .  
 But men of long-enduring hopes,  
 And careless what the hour may bring,  
 Can pardon little would-be Popes  
 And Brummels when they try to sting.  
 An artist, Sir, should rest in art,  
 And waive a little of his claim :  
 To have the great poetic heart  
 Is more than all poetic fame. . . .  
 What profits now to understand  
 The merits of a spotless shirt—  
 A dapper boot—a little hand—  
 If half the little soul is dirt ?  
 A Timon you ! Nay, nay, for shame ;  
 It looks too arrogant a jest—  
 That fierce old man—to take his name,  
 You bandbox ! Off, and let him rest.

This is the crushing blow of a man of peace justly in a rage. The quarrel was ultimately forgiven and forgotten, and at page 652 of MacMillan's volume of Tennyson's Works may be seen the complimentary dedication of *Harold* to the son of Edward Bulwer Lytton, the well-known 'Owen Meredith,' author of *Lucile*.

Tennyson's fame and influence increased with much regularity until his death. However, he more than once perplexed the critics by original and extraordinary departures from their preconceived ideas of taste and judgment; and he occasionally wrote and said things which disturbed the popular conception of what he ought to have said and written. *The Princess* when published in 1847 was altogether incomprehensible both in subject and treatment, to many even of the poet's admirers. Many were disappointed by the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*; *Maud* raised quite a storm of comment; the second *Locksley Hall* was regarded as pessimistic, and *The Promise of May* was well-nigh hooted from the stage. It is said that when Tennyson turned dramatist a great many good old gentlemen who had grown up in the firm belief that he was not a dramatist felt the poet's conduct as a personal grievance and were very much annoyed about it.

In 1850 was published the great lament known the world over as the *In Memoriam*. The author had already achieved a firm and authoritative renown as a poet of beauty and artistic power, but he now added that distinction which has always been regarded as essential to a poet of the first class—he gave evidence of being a great and comprehensive thinker. Not that he had never shown power as a profound thinker before;

indeed his poems *The Poet*, *The Palace of Art*, and *Ulysses*, could have been produced only by an intellect of the highest order ; but in the *In Memoriam* all the world could see manifestly and singularly displayed a combination of intuitive and analytic knowledge and self-knowledge such as only genius has to offer. His work had long been known as beautiful and elevated in tone ; it was now known to be absolutely great.

The year 1850 was the noon-hour of Tennyson's life : born about nine years from the beginning of the nineteenth century, he died about nine years from the beginning of the twentieth ; in 1850 he was forty-one years of age. In that year he published *In Memoriam*, became poet-laureate, and was married to Miss Emily Sellwood.

After his marriage, Tennyson went to live at Twickenham, on the Thames. In 1853 he went with his wife and infant son, Hallam, to live at Farringford, Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight. During the Crimean war the patriotic feelings of Tennyson were deeply stirred, and he endeared himself to the army and to the nation by that great echo of the field of battle, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. This stirring tribute to British valour and discipline was printed on leaflets and distributed among the soldiers who were besieging Sebastopol.

*Maud and Other Poems* was the new volume of 1855. *Maud* was the least popular of his longer poems and was badly received even by the poet's admirers. Time, however, and a clearer knowledge of its purpose and spirit, have done much to vindicate it ; and one of its songs, *Come into the Garden, Maud*, is a general favourite,



If Tennyson had ceased writing at this time it is certain he would have been counted among the great English poets, but his masterpiece was yet to come.

There is little doubt that the *Idylls of the King* is Tennyson's greatest work of art. In wealth and power of imagination, and in sustained grandeur and variety of poetic expression the *In Memoriam* can hardly be considered its rival; while even in strength and subtlety of psychology the superiority of the elegy is perhaps apparent rather than real. In the matter of unity the two poems seem to be alike in this, that each seems to lack unity when read idly, and each reveals much singleness of purpose when studied and mastered. The twelve *Idylls* appeared between 1859 and 1872 and occupied most of their author's energies during that period. *Enoch Arden* appeared in 1864.

As Tennyson grew older his dislike of being lionized and pointed out as a famous public character, grew stronger. This consideration, together with the need of a more bracing climate for Mrs. Tennyson, led to the building of his new home, Aldworth, near Haslemere in Surrey. To this beautiful and secluded residence the family removed in 1869.

The last twenty years of the poet's life were devoted mainly to the writing of his plays. Yet during these years he published a considerable number of short pieces of great finish, some of which are among his best and most popular poems; of these it will be sufficient here to mention *The Revenge*, the wonderful epitaph on *Sir John Franklin*, (the uncle of the poet's wife,) *To Virgil, Crossing the Bar*, and *The Silent Voices*.

In the year 1883 Tennyson and Gladstone went to Denmark

on a yachting excursion. The two were warm friends and passed many happy days together. At Copenhagen they were received by the Royal Family with distinction and cordiality, "the Royal party lunched on the visitors' yacht, and in the afternoon Tennyson read his guests extracts from his poetry." The next January Tennyson became Baron of Aldworth and Farringford, and it is believed that Gladstone, then Prime Minister, had suggested to the poet-laureate the propriety of his accepting this dignity and the accompanying seat in the House of Lords. Nearly nineteen years before this Tennyson had declined the Queen's offer of a baronetcy, but now that he was older and more conservative he thought it not inconsistent with his character and lifelong attitude towards British institutions to accept a title which in his earlier days he had not thought it wise to wear. No courtly title could now add dignity or esteem to the venerable name of Tennyson, nor could the imagination of the people substitute a coronet for the simple wreath of laurel, but the loyal English poet lent the lustre of his name and the spotless integrity of his character to dignify and ennoble a part of the established order of English life which was no doubt dear to the sovereign whom Tennyson loved and revered, and it may reasonably be inferred that an act which a few excitable radicals condemned as a selfish apostacy from liberalism and the progress of democracy was in truth rather a sacrifice to his sincere desire to conserve the stability of the constitution of the Empire. In the House of Peers he voted but twice, once in support of a Bill extending the county franchise, and once in support of the Bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

The last few years of his life were both glorious and pathetic. Month after month the sublime old man kept working away under his burden of years with the clear and commanding intellect, the loving poetical heart, and the polished and beautiful art, of his earlier manhood; every month brought new honours, every poet and critic seemed intent upon saying in the most charming manner the most kind and appreciative words that he could devise concerning the work, the character, and the noble energy, of this crowned King of English Literature: but his sorrows came as rapidly as his honours; as he approached the end, he saw nearly all his early friends drop away; Milnes, Fitzgerald, his brother Frederick, nearly all of those who had been dear to him in early life, had gone the way of young Hallam, and the old man felt at last that he had more to look for in the next life than in this:

“When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
Call me not so often back,  
Silent voices of the dead,  
Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
And the sunlight that is gone!  
Call me rather, silent voices,  
Forward to the starry track  
Glimmering up the heights beyond me,  
On, and always on!”

And so in the autumn of 1892 the author of thousands of immortal lines

“In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
As brandisht at the eyes of ignorance,”

laid aside lance and shield, and rested; leaving the world better, happier and wiser, and the future brighter, on account of his long day's battle.



“The mother-tongue of our imagination.”

—GEORGE ELIOT.



## SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON.

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### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
    The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold.  
High-walled gardens green and old ;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid. 10

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue :  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side :  
    In sooth it was a goodly time, 20  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal

From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.

30

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

40

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillels musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

50

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells



Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn 60  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ; 70  
Not he : but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind : 80  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

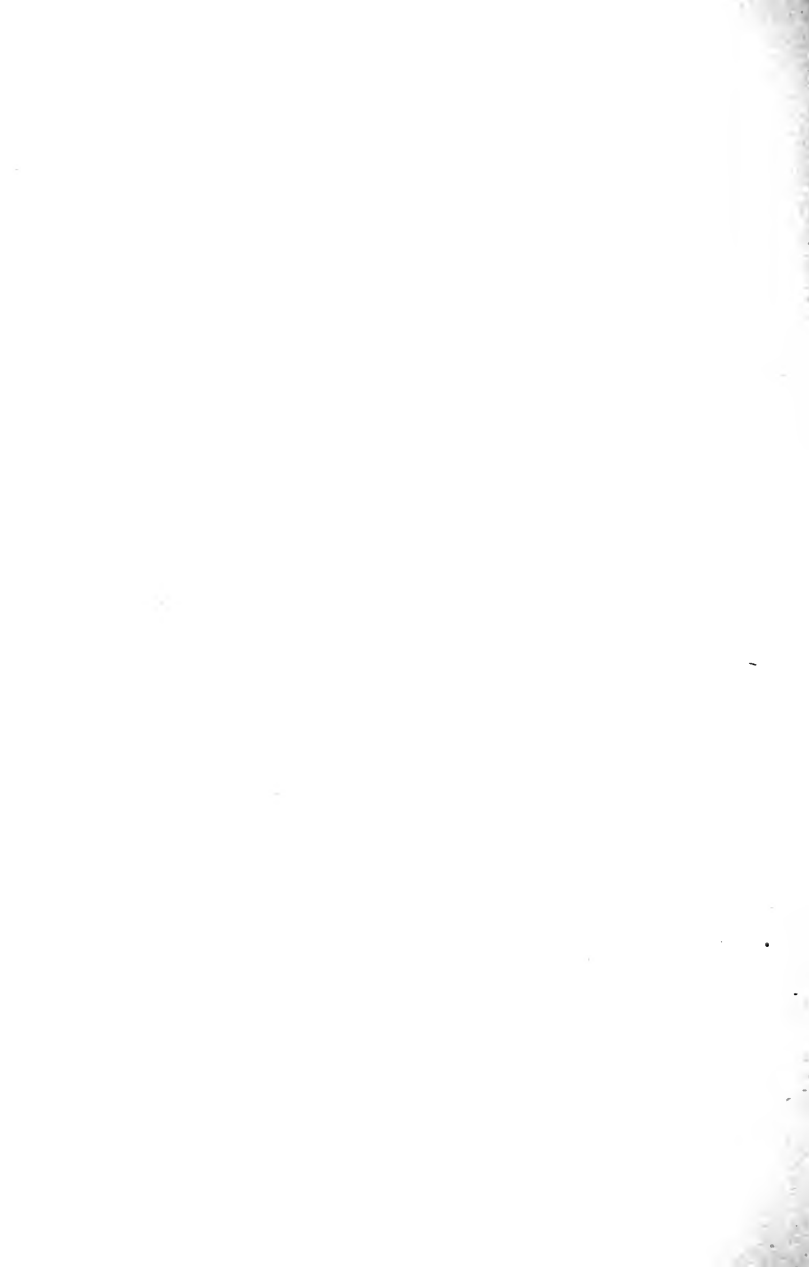
Thence thro' the garden I was drawn— 100  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime 120  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
 As with the quintessence of flame,  
 A million tapers flaring bright  
 From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
 Upon the mooned domes aloof  
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
 Of night new-risen, that marvellous time      130  
 To celebrate the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;      140  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter stirr'd      150  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him—in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.



“The principal end of poetry is to inform men in the iust reason of living.”

—BEN JONSON.



## THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above ;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded  
The secretest walks of fame : 10  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow seeds of the field flower,  
The fruitful wit 20

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
Of high desire.

30

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
Melted like snow.

40

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

50

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
She shook the world.



“ Like hues and harmonies of evening,  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,  
Like memory of music fled,  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

—HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.



## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

## PART I.

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd, 20  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
    Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
Down to tower'd Camelot :  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott.'

30

## PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
The Lady of Shalott.

40

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
Winding down to Camelot :  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
Pass onward from Shalott.

50

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,

Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two :  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
The Lady of Shalott.

60

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
And music, went to Camelot :  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott.

70

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight forever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

80

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot :  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung

A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armour rung,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

96

All in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
     As he rode down to Camelot.  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
     Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
     As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
     Sang Sir Lancelot.

100

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces thro' the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
     She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
     The Lady of Shalott.

110

## PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,      120  
Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot ;

Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance      130

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :      140

And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,





“If all the pens that ever poets held  
Had fed the feeling of their master's thoughts,  
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,  
Their minds, and muses, on admirèd themes ;  
If all the heavenly quintessence they 'still  
From their immortal flowers of poesy,  
Wherein as in a mirror we perceive  
The highest reaches of a human wit ;  
If these had made one poem's period,  
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,  
Yet should there hover in their restless heads  
One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least  
Which into words no virtue can digest.”

—C. MARLOWE.



## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

‘COURAGE!’ he said, and pointed toward the land,  
 ‘This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.’

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke, 10

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;

And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land : far off, three mountain tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush’d ; and, dew’d with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger’d low adown

In the red West : thro’ mountain clefts the dale 20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Border’d with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale ;

A land where all things always seem’d the same !

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them, 30

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore 40  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, ' We will return no more ; '  
And all at once they sang, ' Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam.'

### CHORIC SONG.

#### I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.  
Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy hedge the poppy hangs in sleep.

#### II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,

While all things else have rest from weariness?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone, 60  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm !'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

## III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood, 70  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days, 80  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,

And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
 All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

90

## V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
 Falling asleep in a half dream!  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day,  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

100

110

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives  
 And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change:  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold:  
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:

And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold 120  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There *is* confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath, 130  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
 With halfdropt eyelid still,  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine— 140  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone

Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is  
blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was  
seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains  
in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly  
curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps  
and fiery sands, 160  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and  
praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—  
down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and  
oar ;

Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.



“—Yet tears to human suffering are due ;  
And mortal hopes defeated and o’erthrown  
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,”

—WORDSWORTH.



## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,                 10  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,                 20  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way  
At college ; but another which you had—  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt  
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—  
And then to me demanding why? 'O, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or else                 30

Something so said 't was nothing—that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,  
· Why take the style of those heroic times ?  
For nature brings not back the mastodon,  
Nor we those times ; and why should any man  
Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine  
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,' 40  
Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,  
And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ;  
For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen : then at my request  
He brought it ; and the poet, little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, 50  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.  
So all day long the noise of battle rolled  
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross, 60  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.  
'Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds, 70  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm 80  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere: 90  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down 100  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood, 110  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seemed  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere : 120  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
'Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had followed, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again 130  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,

‘ And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note, 140  
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
 What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
 What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
 An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
 What record, or what relic of my lord  
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath 150  
 And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept,  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
 Saying, “ King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,  
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.”  
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
 To all the people, winning reverence.  
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.’ 160

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
 And hid Excalibur the second time,  
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
 ‘ What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ’  
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, 170

Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !

Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou would'st betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl

Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180

And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bullrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn, 190

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. 200



Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 ' Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 210  
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
 ' My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight.  
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes 220  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear, ' Quick, quick ! 230  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang 240  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, 250  
And, as it were one voice an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands, 260  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose, 270  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
 ' Ah ! my lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead, 280  
 When every morning brought a noble chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge : 290  
 ' The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within Himself make pure ! but thou  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day. 300  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

310

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

320

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell :  
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good !' but we  
 Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work :  
 I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

330

‘There now—that’s nothing!’ drew a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smoulder’d log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
And so to bed : where yet in sleep I seem’d  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores, 340  
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams,  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
‘Arthur is come again : he cannot die.’  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—‘Come again, and thrice as fair ;’  
And, further inland, voices echoed—‘Come 350  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.’  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

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“And though it be a waking dream,  
Yet let it like an odour rise  
To all the Senses here,  
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,  
Or music in their ear.”





## THE DAY-DREAM.

## PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :

A pleasant hour has passed away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm, 10  
The reflex of a legion past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,

Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And order'd words asunder fly. 20

## THE SLEEPING PALACE.

## I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf

Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,

Here stays the blood along the veins,  
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd.

Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world

To spirits folded in the womb.

## II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn. 30  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily : no sound is made, 40  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV.

Here sits the butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;  
The page has caught her hand in his :  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak : 50  
His own are pouted to a kiss :  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
 His state the king reposing keeps.  
 He must have been a jovial king.

60

## VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood ;  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII.

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since.  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy prince.

70

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

## I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
 She lying on her couch alone,  
 Across the purple coverlet,  
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
 On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

80

## II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever ; and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

90

## III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
 In palace chambers far apart.  
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.  
 She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

100

## THE ARRIVAL.

## I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth ;  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
 He travels far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
 A fairy prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II.

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,

110

Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
 This proverb flashes through his head,  
 'The many fail : the one succeeds.'

## III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
 The colour flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ; 120  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind :  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee. 130  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

## THE REVIVAL.

## I.

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;

A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 140

## II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clack't,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III.

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd, 150  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard !  
 How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV.

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago ?' 160  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply :  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE.

## I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old :  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II.

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss ;'  
'O, wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn. 180

## III.

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'  
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

'A hundred summers ! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where ?' 190  
'O seek my father's court with me,

For there are greater wonders there.  
 And o'er the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 Beyond the night, across the day,  
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL.

## I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find no moral there,  
 Go, look in any glass and say,  
 What moral is in being fair. 200  
 Oh, to what uses shall we put  
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
 And is there any moral shut  
 Within the bosom of the rose?

## II.

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
 According as his humours lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind.  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend; 210  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI.

## I.

You shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;



To pass with all our social ties  
     To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
     And learn the world, and sleep again ;                   220  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
     And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
     As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
     The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
     The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
     In divers seasons, divers climes ;                   230  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
     And in the morning of the times.

## II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
     Thro' sunny decades new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquenniads would we reap  
     The flower and quintessence of change.

## III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
     So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
     That I might kiss those eyes awake !                   240  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
     To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
     And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
     My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',

To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
     All-graceful head, so richly curl'd, 250  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
     The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV.

For since the time when Adam first  
     Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
     In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,  
     What lips, like thine, so sweetly joined ?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
     The fulness of the pensive mind ; 260  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
     Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
     That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
     And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
     And that for which I care to live.

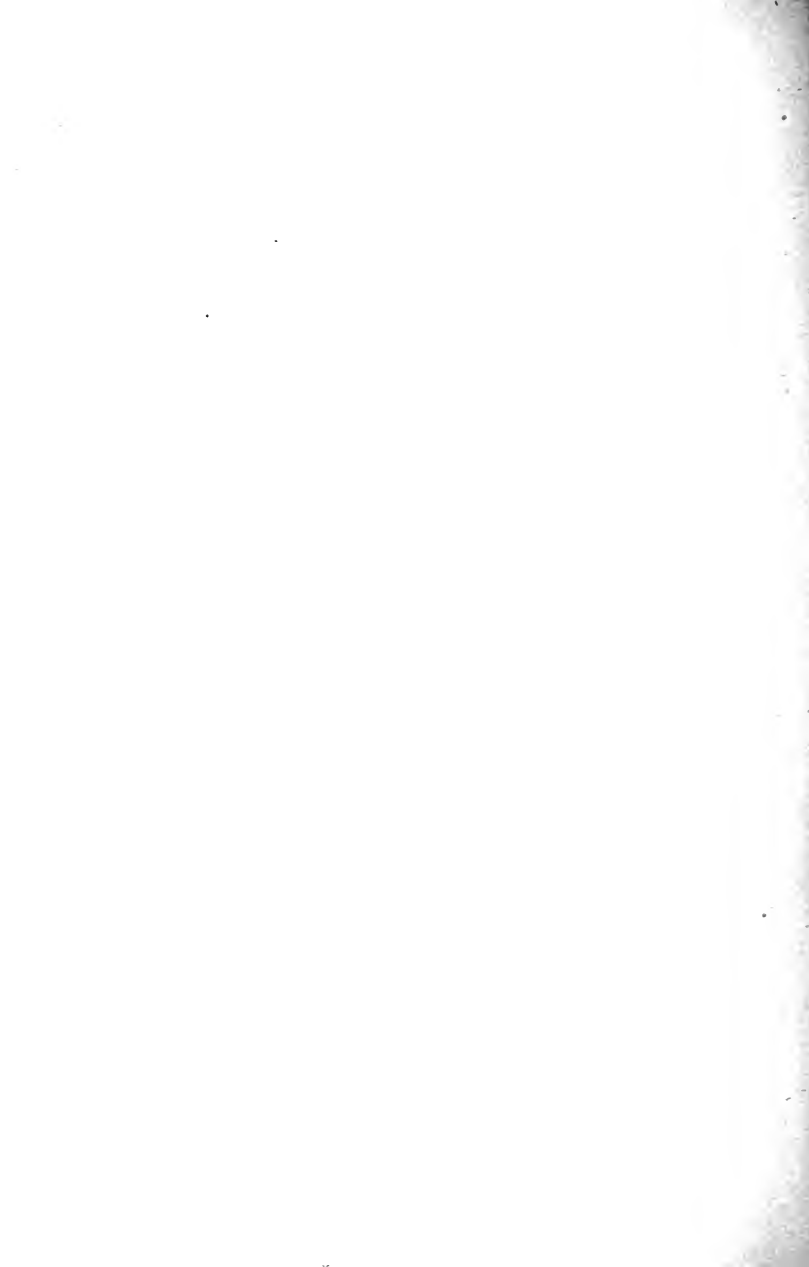
## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
     And, if you find a meaning there, 270  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
     'What wonder, if he thinks me fair ?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
     To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
     That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?

Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

280

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“ Sad memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.”



## THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East  
 And he for Italy—too late—too late :  
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;  
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd, 10  
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or e'vn the sweet half-English Neilgherry air  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him ; for ' O brook,' he says, 20  
 ' O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,  
 Whence come you ? and the brook, why not he replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally,  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

' Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there  
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles, 40  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
 By many a field and fallow,  
 And many a fairy foreland set  
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever. 50

' But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;  
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught  
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
 With here a blossom sailing,  
 And here and there a lusty trout,  
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
 Upon me, as I travel 60  
 With many a silvery waterbreak  
 Above the golden gravel,



And draw them all along, and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

‘O darling Katie Willows, his one child !  
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ; 70  
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

‘Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
 For here I came, twenty years back—the week  
 Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam 80  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push’d at Philip’s garden gate. The gate,  
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
 Stuck ; and he clamour’d from a casement, “ Run ”  
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
 “ Run, Katie ! ” Katie never ran : she moved  
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
 A little flutter’d, with her eyelids down,  
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon. 90

‘What was it ? less of sentiment than sense  
 Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of those  
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
 And nursed by mealy-mouth’d philanthropies,  
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?  
 What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;  
 James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,  
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said. 100  
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
 And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
 Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
 On garden gravel, let my query pass  
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
 If James were coming. "Coming every day,"  
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
 But evermore her father came across  
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;  
 And James departed vext with him and her." 110  
 How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"  
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)  
 "O would I take her father for one hour,  
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.  
 'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!  
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out 120  
 To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes  
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
 He praised his land, his horses, his machines;  
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;  
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;  
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
 Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:  
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each, 130  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :  
Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern  
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :  
"That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."  
And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd, 140  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He gave them line : and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something more,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;  
He gave them line : and how by chance at last 150  
(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,  
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,  
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho, 160  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,

Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
 We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,  
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots, 170  
 I slide by hazel covers ;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows ;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars 180'  
 In brambly wildernesses :  
 I linger by my shingly bars ;  
 I loiter round my cresses :

And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
 All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
 Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome 190  
 Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
 I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
 By the long wash of Australasian seas  
 Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
 And breathes in April-Autumns. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
 In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
 Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
 A tonsured head in middle age forlorn, 200  
 Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
 Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
 And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
 Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
 Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm ?'  
 'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little : pardon me ; 210  
 What do they call you ?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.  
 What surname ?' 'Willows.' 'No !' 'That is my name.'  
 'Indeed !' and here he look'd so self-perplext,  
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
 Then looking at her ; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
 To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.' 220

'Have you not heard ?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
 Am I so like her ? so they said on board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in !'



“O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your Companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.





## THE VOYAGE.

## I.

WE left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the South :  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore !  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

## II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail : 10  
 The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind ; so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

## III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light ! 20  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

## IV.

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;

They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
    Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
    The houseless ocean's heaving field, 30  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
    Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

## V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
    High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
    And dewy Northern meadows green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep  
    Across the boundless east we drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
    The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove. 40

## VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
    Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
    Fantastic plume or sable pine ;

By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
    Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
    Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
    How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark ! 50  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
    With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
    From havens hid in fairy bowers,

With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight. 60  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line;  
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine.'

## IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea, 70  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X.

And only one among us—him  
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :  
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
But ours he swore were all diseased.  
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.  
And overboard one stormy night  
He cast his body, and on we swept. 80

## XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;

We lov'd the glories of the world,  
But laws of nature were our scorn.  
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
But whence were those that drove the sail  
Across the whirl-wind's heart of peace,  
And to and thro' the counter gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow'd where she led :  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead,  
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
We follow that which flies before :  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.



“The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel :  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfumes and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.”



## THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done  
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd The Pure,  
 Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
 Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the cowl  
 The helmet in an abbey far away  
 From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,  
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,  
 And honour'd him, and wrought into his heart 10  
 A way by love that waken'd love within,  
 To answer that which came : and as they sat  
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half  
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
 That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke  
 Above them, ere the summer when he died,  
 The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale :

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,  
 Spring after spring, for half a hundred years :  
 For never have I known the world without, 20  
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but thee,  
 When first thou camest—such a courtesy  
 Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—I knew  
 For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall ;  
 For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
 Some true, some light, but every one of you  
 Stamp'd with the image of the King ; and now  
 Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,  
 My brother ? was it earthly passion crost ?'

‘Nay,’ said the knight; ‘for no such passion mine. 30  
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
 Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,  
 And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out  
 Among us in the jousts, while women watch  
 Who wins, who falls; and waste the spiritual strength  
 Within us, better offer’d up to Heaven.’

To whom the monk: ‘The Holy Grail!—I trust  
 We are green in Heaven’s eyes; but here too much  
 We moulder—as to things without I mean—  
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours, 40  
 Told us of this in our refectory,  
 But spake with such a sadness and so low  
 We heard not half of what he said. What is it?  
 The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?’

‘Nay, monk! what phantom?’ answer’d Percivale.  
 ‘The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord  
 Drank at the last sad supper with his own.  
 This, from the blessed land of Aromat—  
 After the day of darkness, when the dead  
 Went wandering o’er Moriah—the good saint 50  
 Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
 To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.  
 And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
 Could touch or see it, he was heal’d at once,  
 By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
 Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
 Was caught away to Heaven, and disappear’d.’

To whom the monk: ‘From our old books I know  
 That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury, 60  
 And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;



And there he built with wattles from the marsh  
 A little lonely church in days of yore,  
 For so they say, these books of ours, but seem  
 Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
 But who first saw the holy thing to-day ?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,  
 And one no further off in blood from me  
 Than sister ; and if ever holy maid 70  
 With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
 A holy maid ; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
 With such a fervent flame of human love,  
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot  
 Only to holy things ; to prayer and praise  
 She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,  
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
 Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
 And the strange sound of an adulterous race, 80  
 Across the iron grating of her cell  
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what  
 Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
 And each of these a hundred winters old,  
 From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made  
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts became 90  
 Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
 That now the Holy Grail would come again ;  
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,  
 And heal the world of all their wickedness !

“O Father!” ask’d the maiden, “might it come  
To me by prayer and fasting?” “Nay,” said he,  
“I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.”  
And so she pray’d and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro’ her, and I thought  
She might have risen and floated when I saw her. 100

‘For on a day she sent to speak with me.  
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes  
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness.  
And “O my brother Percivale,” she said,  
“Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail :  
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound  
As of a silver horn from o’er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, ‘It is not Arthur’s use 110  
To hunt by moonlight ;’ and the slender sound  
As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,  
Was like that music as it came ; and then  
Stream’d thro’ my cell a cold and silver beam,  
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,  
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed  
With rosy colours leaping on the wall ; 120  
And then the music faded, and the Grail  
Past, and the beam decay’d, and from the walls  
The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,  
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,  
That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be heal’d.”

‘Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this  
To all men ; and myself fasted and pray’d 130  
Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray’d even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

‘And one there was among us, ever moved  
Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
“God made thee good as thou art beautiful,”  
Said Arthur, when he dubb’d him knight : and none,  
In so young youth, was ever made a knight  
Till Galahad ; and this Galahad, when he heard  
My sister’s vision, fill’d me with amaze ; 140  
His eyes became so like her own, they seem’d  
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

‘Sister or brother none had he ; but some  
Call’d him a son of Lancelot, and some said  
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,  
Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come ;  
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd ?

‘But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away  
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair 150  
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet ;  
And out of this she plaited broad and long  
A strong sword belt, and wove with silver thread  
And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
A crimson grail within a silver beam ;  
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,  
Saying, “My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,  
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,  
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.  
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen, 160

And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king  
Far in the spiritual city: "and as she spake  
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind  
On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O brother,  
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
And carven with strange figures; and in and out  
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
And Merlin call'd it "The Siege perilous,"  
Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,  
"No man could sit but he should lose himself:"  
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat  
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,  
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

170

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,  
While the great banquet lay along the hall,  
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

180

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard  
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
And in the blast there smote along the hall  
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:  
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail  
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
And none might see who bare it, and it past.  
But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,

190

And staring each at other like dumb men  
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

‘I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride  
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,  
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot’s cousin, sware, 200  
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,  
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.’

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,  
‘What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?’

‘Nay, for my lord,’ said Percivale, ‘the King,  
Was not in hall: for early that same day,  
Scaped thro’ a cavern from a bandit hold,  
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
Crying on help: for all her shining hair  
Was smear’d with earth, and either milky arm 210  
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore  
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
In tempest: so the King arose and went  
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees  
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit  
Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
Returning o’er the plain that then began  
To darken under Camelot; whence the King  
Look’d up, calling aloud, “Lo, there! the roofs  
Of our great hall are roll’d in thunder-smoke! 220  
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt.”  
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
As having there so oft with all his knights  
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

‘O brother, had you known our mighty hall,  
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook, 230  
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.  
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt  
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:  
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,  
And over all one statue in the mould  
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
And peak’d wings pointed to the Northern Star. 240  
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown  
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame  
At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
Behold it, crying, “We have still a King.”

‘And, brother, had you known our hall within,  
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!  
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur’s wars,  
And all the light that falls upon the board  
Streams thro’ the twelve great battles of our King. 250  
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,  
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how?—  
O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,  
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

‘So to this hall full quickly rode the King,  
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt                   260  
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.

And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all :  
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms  
Hack’d, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear’d,  
Follow’d, and in among bright faces, ours,  
Full of the vision, prest : and then the King  
Spake to me, being nearest, “Percivale,”  
(Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
Vowing, and some protesting), “what is this?”                   270

‘O brother, when I told him what had chanced,  
My sister’s vision, and the rest, his face  
Darken’d, as I have seen it more than once,  
When some brave deed seem’d to be done in vain,  
Darken ; and “Woe is me, my knights,” he cried,  
“Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.”  
Bold was mine answer, “Had thyself been here,  
My King, thou would’st have sworn.” “Yea, yea,” said he,  
“Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?”

“Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light.                   280  
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.”

‘Then when he ask’d us, knight by knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as one :  
“Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.”

“Lo now,” said Arthur, “have ye seen a cloud ?  
What go ye into the wilderness to see?”

‘Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call’d,

“But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail, 290  
 I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
 ‘O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.’”

“‘Ah, Galahad, Galahad,” said the King, “for such  
 As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
 Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—  
 Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
 A sign to maim this Order which I made.  
 But ye, that follow but the leader’s bell”  
 (Brother, the King was hard upon his knights)  
 “Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, 300  
 And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.  
 Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
 Five knights at once, and every younger knight,  
 Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
 Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
 What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Percivales”  
 (For thus it pleased the King to range me close  
 After Sir Galahad); “nay,” said he, “but men  
 With strength and will to right the wrong’d, of power  
 To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, 310  
 Knights that in twelve great battles splash’d and dyed  
 The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood—  
 But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.  
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:  
 Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm  
 Pass thro’ this hall—how often, O my knights,  
 Your places being vacant at my side,  
 This chance of noble deeds will come and go  
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires  
 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most, 320  
 Return no more: ye think I show myself  
 Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet



The morrow morn once more in one full field  
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,  
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may count  
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,  
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from under ground,  
All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full, 330  
So many lances broken—never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came ;  
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,  
Shouting, " Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale ! "

'But when the next day brake from under ground—  
O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old 340  
The King himself had fears that it would fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim ; for where the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass ; and lower, and where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers  
Fell as we past ; and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan, 350  
At all the corners, named us each by name,  
Calling " God speed ! " but in the ways below  
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor  
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak  
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,

Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,  
" 'This madness has come on us for our sins."  
So to the Gate of the three Queens we came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,  
And thence departed every one his way. 360

‘And I was lifted up in heart, and thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,  
So many and famous names ; and never yet  
Had heaven appeared so blue, nor earth so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew  
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

‘Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,  
That most of us would follow wandering fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my mind. 370  
Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death ;  
And I, too, cried, " 'This quest is not for thee."

‘And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook, 380  
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white  
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
And took both ear and eye ; and o'er the brook  
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"  
I said, "I am not worthy of the Quest ;"  
But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once

Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns. 390

‘And then behold a woman at a door  
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,  
And kind the woman’s eyes and innocent,  
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,  
“Rest here;” but when I touch’d her, lo! she, too,  
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house  
Became no better than a broken shed,  
And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone. 400

‘And on I rode, and greater was my thirst,  
Then flash’d a yellow gleam across the world,  
And where it smote the ploughshare in the field,  
The ploughman left his ploughing, and fell down  
Before it; where it glitter’d on her pail,  
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought  
“The sun is rising,” tho’ the sun had risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
In golden armour with a crown of gold 410  
About a casque all jewels; and his horse  
In golden armour jewell’d everywhere:  
And on the splendour came, flashing me blind;  
And seemed to me the Lord of all the world,  
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant  
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,  
Open’d his arms to embrace me as he came,  
And up I went and touch’d him, and he, too,  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns. 420

‘ And I rode on and found a mighty hill,  
And on the top, a city wall’d : the spires  
Prick’d with incredible pinnacles into heaven.  
And by the gateway stirr’d a crowd ; and these  
Cried to me climbing, “ Welcome, Percivale !  
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men ! ”  
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top  
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past  
Far thro’ a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there ; but there I found 430  
Only one man of an exceeding age.  
“ Where is that goodly company,” said I,  
“ That so cried out upon me ? ” and he had  
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp’d,  
“ Whence and what art thou ? ” and even as he spoke  
Fell into dust, and disappear’d, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in grief,  
“ Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into dust.”

‘ And thence I dropt into a lowly vale, 440  
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale  
Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said :

“ O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all ;  
For when the Lord of all things made Himself  
Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
‘ Take thou my robe,’ she said, ‘ for all is thine,’  
And all her form shone forth with sudden light 450  
So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow’d him down, and like a flying star  
Led on the gray-hair’d wisdom of the east ;

But her thou hast not known : for what is this  
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins ?  
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,  
In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer. 460  
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,  
And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone ; but he,  
"Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,  
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine :  
I saw the fiery face as of a child  
That smote itself into the bread, and went ;  
And hither am I come ; and never yet  
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,  
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor come 470  
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,  
Fainter by day, but always in the night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh  
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top  
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode  
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,  
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,  
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,  
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this 480  
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,  
And hence I go ; and one will crown me king  
Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou, too,  
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

‘ While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,  
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew

One with him, to believe as he believed.  
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

‘There rose a hill that none but man could climb,  
Scarr’d with a hundred wintry water-courses— 490  
Storm at the top, and when we gain’d it, storm  
Round us and death; for every moment glanced  
His silver arms and gloom’d: so quick and thick  
The lightnings here and there to left and right  
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,  
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
Sprang into fire: and at the base we found  
On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,  
Part black, part whiten’d with the bones of men, 50  
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king  
Had built a way, where, link’d with many a bridge,  
A thousand piers ran into the great sea.  
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,  
And every bridge as quickly as he crost  
Sprang into fire and vanish’d, tho’ I yearn’d  
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens  
Open’d and blazed with thunder such as seem’d  
Shoutings of all the sons of God: and first  
At once I saw him far on the great Sea, 510  
In silver-shining armour starry-clear;  
And o’er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.  
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,  
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.  
And when the heavens open’d and blazed again  
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
Become a living creature clad with wings?

And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung 520  
 Redder than any Rose, a joy to me,  
 For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.  
 Then in a moment when they blazed again  
 Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
 Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star  
 I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
 And gateways in a glory like one pearl—  
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—  
 Strike from the sea ; and from the star there shot  
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there 530  
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,  
 Which never eyes on earth again shall see.  
 Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep.  
 And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge  
 No memory in me lives ; but that I touch'd  
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know ; and thence  
 Taking my war-horse from the holy man,  
 Glad that no phantom vext me more, return'd  
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for in sooth 540  
 These ancient books—and they would win thee—teem,  
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
 With miracles and marvels like to these,

Not all unlike ; which oftentime I read,  
 Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
 Till my head swims ; and then go forth and pass  
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,  
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
 To these old walls—and mingle with our folk ;  
 And knowing every honest face of theirs 550  
 As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,

And every homely secret in their hearts,  
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
 And ill and aches, and teething, lyings-in,  
 And mirthful sayings, children of the place,  
 That have no meaning half a league away :  
 Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,  
 Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,  
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,  
 Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs— 560  
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,  
 No man, no woman ?'

Then Sir Percivale :

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
 And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,  
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee  
 How far I falter'd from my quest and vow ?  
 For after I had lain so many nights,  
 A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake, 570  
 In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan  
 And meagre, and the vision had not come ;  
 And then I chanced upon a goodly town  
 With one great dwelling in the middle of it ;  
 Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd  
 By maidens each as fair as any flower :  
 But when they led me into hall, behold,  
 The Princess of that castle was the one,  
 Brother, and that one only, who had ever  
 Made my heart leap ; for when I moved of old 580  
 A slender page about her father's hall,  
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
 Went after her with longing : yet we twain  
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.



And now I came upon her once again,  
 And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
 And all his land and wealth and state were hers.  
 And while I tarried, every day she set  
 A banquet richer than the day before  
 By me ; for all her longing and her will 590  
 Was toward me as of old ; till one fair morn,  
 I walking to and fro beside a stream  
 That flash'd across her orchard underneath  
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
 And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,  
 And gave herself and all her wealth to me.  
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,  
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,  
 And the quest faded in my heart. Anon, 600  
 The heads of all her people drew to me,  
 With supplication both of knees and tongue :  
 " We have heard of thee : thou art our greatest knight,  
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe :  
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."  
 O me, my brother ! but one night my vow  
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,  
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her ; 610  
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk, ' Poor men, when yule is cold,  
 Must be content to sit by little fires.  
 And this am I, so that ye care for me  
 Ever so little ; yea, and blest be Heaven  
 That brought thee here to this poor house of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm  
 My cold heart with a friend : but O the pity  
 To find thine own first love once more—to hold, 620  
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,  
 Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,  
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
 For we that want the warmth of double life,  
 We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet  
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
 Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,  
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
 But live like an old badger in his earth,  
 With earth about him everywhere, despise 630  
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,  
 None of your knights ?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale :

'One night my pathway swerving east, I saw  
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
 All in the middle of the rising moon :  
 And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,  
 And each made joy of either ; then he ask'd,  
 "Where is he ? hast thou seen him—Lancelot ?—Once,"  
 Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me—mad, 640  
 And maddening what he rode : and when I cried,  
 'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
 So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not !  
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
 For now there is a lion in the way.'  
 So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
 Because his former madness, once the talk  
 And scandal of our table, had return'd ; 650

For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him  
 That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors  
 Beyond the rest : he well had been content  
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,  
 The Holy Cup of healing ; and, indeed,  
 Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
 Small heart was his after the Holy Quest :  
 If God would send the vision, well : if not,  
 The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

‘And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors      660  
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,  
 And found a people there among their crags,  
 Our race and blood, a remnant that were left  
 Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
 They pitch up straight to heaven : and their wise men  
 Were strong in that old magic which can trace  
 The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him  
 And this high Quest as at a simple thing :  
 Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's words—  
 A mocking fire : “ what other fire than he,      670  
 Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,  
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd ? ”  
 And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,  
 Hearing he had a difference with their priests,  
 Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell  
 Of great piled stones ; and lying bounden there  
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep  
 Over him till by miracle—what else ?—  
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,      680  
 Such as no wind could move : and thro' the gap  
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then came a night  
 Still as the day was loud ; and thro' the gap

The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—  
For, brother, so one night, because they roll  
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,  
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—  
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,  
In on him shone : " And then to me, to me,"  
Said good Sir Bors, " beyond all hopes of mine, 690  
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—  
Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me—  
In colour like the fingers of a hand  
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,  
Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk : ' And I remember now  
That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors it was 700  
Who spake so low and sadly at our board ;  
And mighty reverent at our grace was he :  
A square-set man and honest ; and his eyes,  
An out-door sign of all the warmth within,  
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,  
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one :  
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when ye reach'd  
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,  
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King ?' 710

Then answer'd Percivale : ' And that can I,  
Brother, and truly ; since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again  
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd

The city, our norses stumbling as they trode  
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,  
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones  
 Raw, that they fell from, brought us to the hall. 720

' And there sat Arthur on the daïs-throne,  
 And those that had gone out upon the Quest,  
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,  
 And those that had not, stood before the King,  
 Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad me hail,  
 Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves  
 Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
 On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.  
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
 Among the strange devices of our kings ; 730  
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,  
 And from the statue Merlin moulded for us  
 Half-wrench'd a golden wing ; but now—the Quest,  
 This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup,  
 That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury ?"

' So when I told him all thyself hast heard,  
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
 To pass away into the quiet life,  
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd  
 Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for thee ?" 740

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for such as I.  
 Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
 Who made me sure the Quest was not for me ;  
 For I was much aweari'd of the Quest :  
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
 And merry maidens in it ; and then this gale  
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,

And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort ; yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me." 750

‘He ceased ; and Arthur turn’d to whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push’d  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
“Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail ;” and Bors,  
“Ask me not, for I may not speak of it :  
I saw it ;” and the tears were in his eyes.

‘Then there remain’d but Lancelot, for the rest 760  
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm ;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last ;  
“Thou, too, my Lancelot,” ask’d the King, “my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail’d for thee ?”

““Our mightiest!” answer’d Lancelot, with a groan ;  
“O King !”—and when he paused, methought I spied  
A dying fire of madness in his eyes--  
“O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be, 770  
Happier are those that welter in their sin,  
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,  
Slime of the ditch : but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,  
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung  
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower  
And poisonous grew together, each as each,  
Not to be pluck’d asunder ; and when thy knights  
Sware, I swear with them only in the hope  
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail

They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake 780  
To one most holy saint, who wept and said,  
That save they could be pluck'd asunder, all  
My quest were but in vain ; to whom I vow'd  
That I would work accordiug as he will'd.  
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove  
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
My madness came upon me as of old,  
And whipt me into waste fields far away ;  
There was I beaten down by little men,  
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword 790  
And shadow of my spear had been enow  
To scare them from me once ; and then I came  
All in my folly to the naked shore,  
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew ;  
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea  
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens 800  
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.  
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,  
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain ;  
And in my madness to myself I said,  
'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'  
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
And with me drove the moon and all the stars ;  
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night 810  
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,  
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,

A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
And steps that met the breaker ! there was none  
Stood near it but a lion on each side  
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.  
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.  
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes 820  
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,  
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between ;  
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,  
' Doubt not, go forward ; if thou doubt, the beasts  
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence  
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.  
And up into the sounding hall I past ;  
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
Or shield of knight ; only the rounded moon 830  
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
But always in the quiet house I heard,  
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower  
To the eastward : up I climb'd a thousand steps  
With pain : as in a dream I seem'd to climb  
For ever : at the last I reach'd a door,  
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
' Glory and joy and honour to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.' 840  
Then in my madness I essay'd the door ;  
It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—  
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around



Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes.  
 And but for all my madness and my sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw 850  
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd  
 And cover'd; and this Quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—  
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—  
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,  
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?  
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field? 860  
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad.  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,  
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things 870  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,  
 For these have seen according to their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the chord:  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth. 880

“Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot : never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,  
 With such a closeness, but apart there grew,  
 Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,  
 Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness ;  
 Where to see thou, that it may bear its flower.

“And spake I not too truly, O my knights ?  
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
 To those who went upon the Holy Quest, 890  
 That most of them would follow wandering fires,  
 Lost in the quagmire ?—lost to me and gone,  
 And left me gazing at a barren board,  
 And a lean Order—scarce return’d a tithe—  
 And out of those to whom the vision came  
 My greatest hardly will believe he saw ;  
 Another hath beheld it afar off,  
 And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,  
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
 And one hath had the vision face to face, 900  
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,  
 However they may crown him elsewhere.

“And some among you held, that if the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow :  
 Not easily, seeing that the King must guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to plow,  
 Who may not wander from the allotted field  
 Before his work be done ; but, being done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the day 910  
 Come, as they will ; and many a time they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,

This air that smites his forehead is not air  
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—  
In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
And knows himself no vision to himself,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
Who rose again : ye have seen what ye have seen.”

‘So spake the King : I knew not all he meant.’ 920

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE GENIUS OF TENNYSON.

Of all the charges which the critics have brought against Tennyson, that of being conscious, and artificial, in his work, seems to be the most thoughtless ; not because the charge is unfounded, but because the critics themselves are largely responsible for the fault. It was inevitable that a temperament like Tennyson's, keenly intelligent, acutely sensitive, deficient in spirits, when exposed to the searching and frequently petty and envious criticism of this century, should develop a morbid self-criticism inimical to the easy and unconscious freedom and confidence which go so far to produce an air of natural inspiration and spontaneous utterance in literary productions. That this artificial quality is the result of modern conditions rather than a personal peculiarity of Tennyson is manifest from the almost universal presence of it in the works of recent writers of much imagination and sensibility, and from the freedom from it of the great writers who lived before the poets were so closely watched.

If Tennyson failed of the supreme achievement as a poet it would seem that he failed chiefly through causes which might have proved too much for Homer or even Shakespeare himself, namely, a hopelessly unfit age for great poetical achievement, a hopelessly wrong education for the highest kind of objective work, and a lack of what Shakespeare himself calls "spirits to enforce" the great and noble poetical gifts which were his endowment from nature.

Tennyson began by writing lyric poetry ; no critic has ever questioned the success of his lyrics : the song of *The Brook*, the songs in the *Idylls of the King*, the songs in *The Princess*,

a song in *Maud*, and many more are as lovely as Swinburne's or Herrick's, as good as the songs of writers who have achieved high fame by writing songs only. From lyric Tennyson passed to epic poetry with the result that his greatest epic is his greatest work. It would be extremely difficult to name an epic in English which is not inferior to the *Idylls of the King*, especially if we speak of epic poetry without regarding works whose material is drawn from the unknown world. No sooner had Tennyson secured fame in this second and higher form of poetry than he passed to the Drama, thereby indicating that he held, as all critics do, that the Drama is the supreme form of art expressed in language.

There is a pretty general agreement of opinion that Tennyson did not write any great play. Mr. Van Dyke echoes the opinion of Mr. R. H. Hutton that Tennyson's *Queen Mary* is superior to *Henry VIII.*, but this opinion is one which would become more authoritative if its author would dispose of the fundamental objection that there is an air of academic intellectuality, a lack of sympathy with action in the busy world which baffles and neutralizes even the mind of Tennyson, striving as it never strove before to do the impossible. The claims made for *Queen Mary* by Mr. Hutton are made sincerely and with his usual discrimination. The American critic in a passage bristling with inaccuracies, compares *Queen Mary* to "Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*," and never once hints that Shakespeare did not write the whole play, in spite of the fact that there is a growing belief that Shakespeare wrote little of it. He speaks of the song sung to Queen Katherine to cheer her, as "the song of Queen Catherine," and assures us that a song in *Queen Mary* is "infinitely more pathetic than Shakespeare's stiff little lyric." Mr. Van Dyke quotes George Eliot to the effect that "Tennyson's plays run Shakespeare's close."

In spite of opinions like Mr. Hutton's, and of opinions like Mr. Van Dyke's, there is a general agreement among critics and public that Tennyson's plays are a failure. In spite of his study of the magnificent models left by his adored Shakespeare, Tennyson only succeeded in writing a play which even his blindest admirers compare with *Henry VIII.*, a play which ranks low in the historical plays of Shakespeare, and which, according to the best judges, including Tennyson himself, is largely by Fletcher, and according to a few reputable judges contains no line of Shakespeare's work.

Accordingly Tennyson's masterpiece, the work on which we judge his standing in the ranks of the immortals, is his *Idylls of the King*, but this work is supported by such a volume of poems of the greatest variety of form and substance, and of the most lovely melody (and grace and harmony of language) of artistic conception, that we feel prejudiced in favour of giving the poet a much higher praise than his masterpiece would warrant.

If he had succeeded in creating dramas, either histories or pure comedies, or tragedies, as great and successful in the drama as his epic was in the epic, Tennyson would have been a literary star of the first magnitude, rivalling Hugo, and even Goethe himself.

Whether any genius can retain the simplicity, the absence of consciousness and artificiality, the pristine vigour and naturalness essential to great dramatic work, in an age when every monthly weekly and daily journal is analysing the very soul of every literary man from a Tennyson to an undergraduate poet, is rather more than doubtful. Whether the soul of Burns himself could have been full of loving instincts and immediate insight into the human heart, if Burns had been brought up in the refined and isolated seclusion of the home at Somersby until the age of twenty, can hardly be

graced with a single doubt. And there is very little doubt that Tennyson with all his supremacy of intellect and royalty of heart, lacked that vigorous animal nature which is often the gift of the most commonplace, but which is nevertheless essential to the best work of the greatest.

There are many schools of poetical criticism and many interesting opinions concerning the essential elements of ideal poetry, but it would be difficult to find any great or serious definition of poetry which is not satisfied by the works of Tennyson. Sensuous beauty, intellectual beauty, beauty of language and form, didactic worth, inspiration, concreteness of expression as great as the medium of words will permit, all are found, and found in profusion in the works of Tennyson. The versatility and the breadth of appreciation which characterize this poet are so great that there is hardly any known form of verse which he has not used well nor any legitimate material which he has not treated with distinction.

Few poets have exhibited the capacity for continual improvement shown by this writer. Again and again it was said that he had reached the height of his powers, again and again he surpassed his own record and scored new successes in unexpected directions. In 1845 it was said that the beautiful Greek poems marked his limit of genius, in 1850 he passed from the ranks of writers of beautiful poems to become the writer of the powerful as well as beautiful *In Memoriam*. It was then held that while Tennyson was a great subjective writer he yet had not the gift of creating men and women; but in the creation of Launcelot, Guinevere, Arthur, Merlin, he made it known that within certain limits he could succeed in that last and highest reach of human wit which seems to justify the intellectual pride of Hamlet when he declared that this paragon of animals is in apprehension so like a god.

The history of his art is the transition from lyric to epic,



and from epic to drama; the history of his mind is from superficial beauty to intellectual profundity, and on again from philosophical speculation to that earnest interest in life which Matthew Arnold calls morality. He is the true Ulysses who followed knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

As a means of studying poetry, the complete works of Tennyson make an almost ideal book. The youngest readers enjoy the *May Queen*, *The Revenge*, *The Children's Hospital*, *The Voyage*, *The Voyage of Maeldune*, *The Beggar Maid*, *Lady Clare*, *The Defence of Lucknow*; in fact these are among the most popular poems known to the young. For readers approaching maturity there are numerous poems both thoughtful and romantic, such as the English Idyls, the poems connected with the story of Troy, *Enoch Arden*, *Aylmer's Field*, *Locksley Hall*, *Maud*, *Freedom*. Then the *In Memoriam*, *The Princess*, *The Idylls of the King*, challenge the best study of mature students, and, rightly assimilated, strengthen and inform the taste and judgment with a body of thought and of critical canons which must be always precious in themselves and an attraction and discriminating test for whatever the mind may need for its further growth and harmony.

Whatever the student may need as the material of education may be found here in a convenient compass; here he may read of the contour, vesture and colour of nature in sunshine, by starlight, in storm, or in the serenity and peace of English lawn or meadow; here the birds sing, the flowers bloom, the brooks murmur; here he may learn the meaning as well as the sensuous impression of a daisy, a rose, a lily, a dandelion, a sunrise, a mountain, an echo, or a complex landscape; here his mind may be filled with the stores of knowledge, historical, botanical, philosophical; he may appreciate the beauty of orderly thought, of close and powerful reasoning, of sublime

speculation, of symmetrical and impregnable argument ; here he may find in new forms of expression and unobtrusively embodied in tales of quiet fortitude or deathless heroism the simple yet complex system of conduct which the world has found to be the best foundation of civilized, sweet, and enlightened conditions of human life ; and finally, in such poems as *Sir Galahad* and the *Holy Grail* he may find an antidote for the hard materialism which would degrade the social structure by denying or polluting all its mysteries.

Here also the student may read language which for eloquence, fitness, strength, accuracy, and beauty, has rarely been equalled in any speech of man.

A calm and unprejudiced estimate of the mind and works of Tennyson is well-nigh impracticable. The great English critics have been more or less fettered in their judgments by the poet's popularity and position in English life, and in their articles by the fact that Tennyson was known to be impatient of criticism, and, as one writer boldly affirms, to do his best work when he worked in the sunshine of love and praise. We are still too near him to see him as he truly was. Perhaps there is reason to believe that the coming century will take a different estimate of Tennyson from that which has generally prevailed in this ; no reputation is secure from that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin—the envy and calumny of time ; unless indeed it be the reputation of the poet who declared the envy of time to be the common lot of man.

Genius is the endowment which we recognize as peculiar to great men : it is founded on a happy mingling of the elements in the constitution of the possessor ; there must be strength of heart and mind, there must be immediate knowledge of natural law in all its essentials, and there must be a general harmony between the will and the conditions imposed by nature. When to this happy combination of elements is superadded activity in

suitable environments there springs up in the mind a great interest in the human family which rapidly develops into a broad and profound sympathy.

This sympathy shows itself in an unusual power of realizing the feelings and thoughts of others, whether of sorrow or joy, hope or fear, love or hatred, kindness or cruelty, baseness or sublimity. The sympathies act as a stimulus in moments of thoughtfulness to bring before the mind's eye living examples of the feelings in respect of which those sympathies are exercised; hence sympathy stimulates and develops the imagination.

Now imagination is the proof of genius. Without imagination was no man or woman ever a genius: and it may be concluded that as the genius is commensurate with the imagination so the imagination is commensurate with the breadth and depth of sympathy in its fullest sense. Now as the power of interest in our fellow beings is dependent upon our native vital energies, our instinctive knowledge of, and happy obedience to, the laws of our being, it may be truly affirmed that a genius is born and not made; but it would be false to affirm that one endowed with the elements of greatness might not wreck his gifts or fail to develop them, or that the world would always get the full fruits of gifts that nature might bestow upon particular men.

Now this gift of imagination is in reality another phase of what many writers call love, and when it is said that the great poets are the greatest lovers, it is in effect no more to say than that they have the greatest imaginations. When we say that Shakespeare had a great imagination we mean that he had a love for the human race so great that he knew the very heart of the whole race and understood the joys and sorrows of every man, woman and child, from Lear to little Arthur, and from the unfortunate Lady Macbeth to the happy Portia; Jews,

Moors, and Christians ; soldiers, prelates, sailors, kings ; human beings, ancient and modern, rich and poor, grave or funny, gifted or stupid, were all known to him as intimately through his great love and imagination as if they had been his brothers and sisters whom he had always known and understood : and he preaches to them and scolds them and finds fault with them and admires them and laughs and rejoices and mourns with them no more and no less than if they had indeed all been his brothers and sisters. And so it has come about that no man doubts Shakespeare or speaks lightly of him or profanely, more than he would of his ablest and tenderest brother. Within the regions of literature it is inconceivable that there can ever be genius or imagination surpassing his ; but if there could be a heart in which our common mother could mingle more powerfully or harmoniously all the approved elements of our human make-up, that heart might be conceived to have powers with nature which surpass what we are able to conceive.

Now it is certain that Tennyson had the most exalted pride in Shakespeare ; he regarded him with the feelings which never fail to spring up towards him in those to whom he becomes known : in the *In Memoriam* when he wished to say in the noblest way that he loved Hallam with his whole heart he said :—

“ I loved thee, spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.”

The poets are regarded with pride by the human family because of their fine endowments from nature, and no one feels jealous or envious of them because they are always simple and affectionate. Tennyson desired to be a very great poet because he desired to have the great poetic heart, and as he grew older he knew that the love of birds and flowers, and landscapes, and art, and beauty, and youth, and romance, is not enough to make a poet of the first order. He saw that books have only

certain uses in balancing the elements of the mind. He began more seriously to think about his fellow-beings and to cultivate an interest in sick children and ignorant peasants so that his sympathies might be developed and his imagination strengthened in all directions. And in great measure he succeeded. But there were always many classes of people whom he did not fully know; whether because he began too late to know them, or whether he lacked the warmth of affection which is the condition of such knowledge, it is difficult to say.

Possibly Tennyson's melancholy, like the melancholy of all genius, was a grief over the incapacity for greater instinctive sympathy and imaginative insight.

In its desires and aspirations no mind could be more right, noble, and ideal: in it there was no darkness which any effort could overcome; he saw where the light was and moved toward it, he knew that there is no darkness but ignorance of the heart of man; he knew how this darkness must be dispelled, and if he had a fault beyond the defects of nature and early environment it must have been the chilling idealism which makes him seem occasionally priggish, and which arose from a desire to keep his heart large enough for the energies with which he desired to store it. His was a nature which could never rest contented until his knowledge of men, that is to say, his sympathy or love, and imagination, should become as great as that of the greatest. His works would have a more real and human ring if his ambition had been less magnificent.

Burns had a great heart: his feelings were not rarified by an impossible effort to fill vast intellectual conceptions, and he goes straight to the heart. Goethe had a great heart, combined with uncommon breath and profundity of intellect: his love and imagination proved equal to the enormous task of vivifying with real power even the largest conceptions of his

mind. In Tennyson we find a mind so filled with large conceptions that the heart is often unable to keep in touch with it, and hence in his longer works there seems to be a lack of vital power to give unity to compositions which in their structure are faultless, massive, and symmetrical.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE WORKS OF TENNYSON.

Many students would receive false impressions of Tennyson if they were to begin to read his works through from the first page. Doubtless the older student, who has become addicted to Tennyson, embraces within his affections every line and phrase of the *Juvenilia*, and takes a deep pleasure, biographical or poetical, in *The Promise of May*, but it is wise for beginners to read poems selected and arranged with a view to establishing that fundamental appreciation of the poet upon which the more comprehensive regard may be built. After the introduction to the poet which books of selections give, there is in many cases a strong desire for further acquaintance: this is acquired by reading other poems similar to those first enjoyed, and then by proceeding to more profound or ambitious examples of the author's genius.

The chief aim of the present chapter is to give a beginner the assistance he may desire in proceeding to a knowledge of the author beyond what he can get from these few selections; first, by indicating an order in which his other poems may be studied; and second, by giving such assistance with his most difficult poems, the *In Memoriam* and *The Idylls of the King*, as may enable the student to master the A B C of their full import.

We venture the opinion that to the lover of Tennyson, *Guinevere* is the most satisfying of his poems, and combines all his best qualities. To attain to a full appreciation of this poem is to appreciate the poet. But the excellencies of *Guinevere* are various and the young student would perhaps do well, before proceeding to the masterpiece, to make a study of those

of Tennyson's other poems that are marked by one or more of those good qualities which we find united in *Guinevere*.

Tennyson consciously set himself to master the technique of his art and made it his first aim to acquire sweetness and evenness of expression. *Claribel*, a melody, stands very appropriately on the front page in his works to mark this primary and all-important excellence of his work. The student of Tennyson should seek to acquire a knowledge of the poet's voice and it need hardly be said that in order to do this he should read the poems aloud. As to the reading of his poems the poet used to state that the very best readers failed to satisfy him in their reading of his verses and that the rhythmical effects were often almost entirely lost. Tennyson himself read his poems with a very peculiar cadence and his reading often tested the gravity and decorum of his hearers. The fact seems to be that he more than any other English writer has made quantity an important feature in verse, and in reading his poems we fail to do him justice unless we give effect to the full, rich, languorous cadences. In the introduction to *Morte D'Arthur* we are given a hint of how the poet would have us read his lines, "Mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, deep-chested music," the line "Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos dust is blown," is a good example of the deep organ-tone characteristically Tennyson's.

Coleridge said that Milton's poetry appealed to the ear rather than to the eye, but, although Tennyson's poems appeal powerfully to the ear, they are equally successful in their effect on the visual imagination. This power of vivid expression is not mere successful phrase-making, but is the outcome of a special faculty of observation, and the poet is as the painter lending his eyes out. I select as an example of this second quality of Tennyson's poetry :—



“ Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
 And on these dews that drench the furze,  
 And all the silvery gossamers  
 That twinkle into green and gold.”

Indeed in Tennyson we frequently find passages at once strikingly picturesque and very telling in their sound effects, though the sound quality now spoken of is rather harmony than mere euphoniousness. These passages strike the lover of Tennyson as the acme of felicitous expression. *Maud* furnishes an example :—

“ Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave.”

Or the lines from *Sir Galahad*, which we cannot refrain from adding :—

“ The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel ;  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.”

Whatever may be the secret of that spell that Greek literature holds over modern poetry Tennyson has made good use of it, and the old fascination is felt in the *Lotos-Eaters*, and *Ænone*, and *Tithonus*, and *Ulysses*. The classical charm is as much felt in Tennyson's work as in that of any English writer who has tried to interpret for us the ancient spirit. Wordsworth's *Laodamia*, Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, and perhaps, Keats' works, might be read with advantage in connection with the above-mentioned poems of Tennyson.

After reading *The Lotos-Eaters*, *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, *The Day-Dream*, and *The Lady of Shalott*, the student

should proceed with *Mariana*, *Far-far-Away*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, *Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*, *The Palace of Art*, and the *Sea-Fairies*. These poems will render the reader familiar with the euphonious and picturesque in Tennyson. Of course with the *Lotos-Eaters* the poet's other classical productions mentioned above should be read; and the *Lady of Shalott*, and *Lancelot and Guinevere* should be again taken up with the *Idylls of the King*. With *The Brook*, and *Enone*, there should be read *The Talking Oak*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *Dora*, and *Enoch Arden*. These form a group of landscapes with the human interest kept well to the front. This was a style of poetry in which Tennyson was singularly successful; he was an adept in giving the human story its appropriate setting. Having mastered these selections the student is ready to take up *The Idylls of the King*. These Idylls undoubtedly constitute one poem and it would be a dangerous proceeding to recommend these works to be taken up singly; yet if any were chosen for special study, *Guinevere*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, *The Holy Grail*, and *The Passing of Arthur* would be naturally chosen. When the student has made a study of the *Idylls* he will find himself so much a Tennysonian that in all probability he will disdain all further direction. *Crossing the Bar*, *To Sleep*, and the other lyrics scattered through *The Princess* and the dramas will teach appreciation for Tennyson's lightness of touch in this part of his work. Many of his lyrics are strikingly like Shakespeare's in their freedom, grace and suggestiveness. We find the successful ballad in *The Revenge*, *Lady Clare* and *Edward Gray*; and whatever may be thought of our poet's dramatic powers, *The Northern Farmer* (both old style and new) and the other short monologues are very admirable. *Maud* has been more admired for its lyric qualities than its dramatic, but it is not wanting in excellence as a delineation of a super-sensitive and insane character reacting against romantic and tragic circumstance. Those poems that express Tennyson's

exalted patriotism, *The Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *Dedication to Prince Albert*, "*Of old sat Freedom on the heights*," commend themselves to the reader.

We have now alluded to several points of view from which the late laureate's poetry is to be valued; one important one remains, the bearing of his work on the thought of the time deserves attention and *The Princess*, *In Memoriam* and *Locksley Hall* will be appreciated by the more matured student.

*The Idylls of the King* was not at first put before the public in its present form. In 1642, Tennyson published Idylls of the King. with a brief framework of introduction and conclusion his *Morte d'Arthur*, which was afterwards incorporated in the *Passing of Arthur*, of which it now forms lines 170-440. In 1859 appeared *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine* and *Guinevere*, and about ten years later the *Coming of Arthur*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *The Holy Grail*, and the *Passing of Arthur*. *Gareth and Lynette*, and the *Last Tournament* followed in 1871-2, and finally in 1885, *Balin and Balan* was added and *Enid* was divided into the *Marriage of Geraint* and *Enid*. The Arthurian legend, the story of King Arthur and his knights, on which this poem is based, is probably of Celtic origin, and has formed the ground work of many literary productions not only in England, but also on the continent. An actual historic Arthur seems to have been a leader of the Cymny at the beginning of the sixth century, and to have maintained warfare against the Saxons and Piets and Scots. His exploits told first in the songs of the bards gradually took on more and more of the wonderful; he was confounded with a Celtic demi-god Arthur, Arcturus, whose constellation in the heavens we know as ("Arthur's slow wain") the Great Bear. The Celtic chief became a marvelous and super-human figure. The Arthurian legend grew from generation to generation. The Christian missionaries transfused into this popular tradition

many of their own ideas and ideals, and the chivalry of a later period made of Arthur the typical redresser of wrongs, sending the knights errant forth on their missions of justice. In Spenser, Arthur is the embodiment of all the virtues. Tennyson drew the greater part of the materials for his epic from Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, a prose romance written in 1469-70, and printed by Caxton in 1485. Tennyson has refined away and omitted much that is absurd and gross in Sir Thomas Malory's work, has thrown back into the old legend the ideas of our own time and has thereby given these tales of knight and lady a significance they had not before. Some of Tennyson's finest lyrics, *St. Agnes Eve* (1837), *The Lady of Shalott* (1832), *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* (1842), draw their inspiration from the Arthurian legend.

The Idylls are not wanting in unity. They all centre about the great personality of Arthur, and a single theme is dealt with, Sense at war with Soul. In *Gareth and Lynette*, the good readily and bravely asserts itself over the evil; in the *Marriage of Geraint*, the good is triumphant, though the tale is darkened by a hint of Guinevere's infidelity; in *Geraint and Enid*, the good succeeds after a severe struggle; in *Balin and Balan* the evil precipitates the tragic fate of a rash man; in *Merlin and Vivien* knowledge and wisdom are overcome by the evil in the form of the false; in *Lancelot and Elaine* innocence falls a prey to the evil; in the *Holy Grail* the knights seek to retain the good by a transcendental religiousness; in *Pelleas and Ettarre* an innocent and enthusiastic knight is made mad at discovering the prevalence of evil; in the *Last Tournament* the evil alone remains at Camelot; *Guinevere* brings the catastrophe of exposure and punishment. There is great divergence of treatment in the different idylls as might be expected in a work that took so long in the composition. The perhaps too palpable allegory of *Gareth and Lynette* differs widely from the straight-forwardness of *Lancelot and Elaine*. Yet their is suffi-

cient similarity in the Idylls to justify our speaking of their style as a whole. In them we find all Tennyson's merits, his picturesqueness, but aptness of expression, his full, stately, but sympathetic and variable music, his lyrical felicity displayed in the interspersed songs, his moral earnestness and exalted public sentiment, his dramatic excellence, and finally his mystical suggestiveness. In this masterpiece the mediæval and romantic is chastened into the Homeric and classical.

These idylls are dedicated to the memory of Prince Albert.

PARAGRAPH  
TOPICS OF THE  
IDYLLS OF  
THE KING.  
DEDICATION.

The Laureate eulogizes Albert the Good—exhorts the queen to endurance, and prays that her majesty may be encompassed with love.

Leodogran, King of Cameliard, had a daughter Guinevere.

The Coming  
of Arthur.

Before Arthur came the whole land was divided among petty princes. Aurelius and Uther failed to unite the realm, but Arthur succeeded. Cameli-

ard was laid waste and attacked. Its King applied to Arthur. He came, fell in love with Guinevere, drove the enemies away and returned. On his return he found a war kindled by the lords that disputed his birth. He contemplates making Guinevere his queen. Arthur overcomes his enemies and he and Lancelot swear eternal love. He sends to Cameliard asking Leodogran for Guinevere. Leodogran, doubtful of Arthur's birth, consults the chamberlain. Merlin and Bleyes know of Arthur's origin. Leodogran summons the messengers again. He asks if Arthur is Uther's son. They answer that he is, and Bedivere tells of many rumors and of his own belief that Arthur is the son of Uther and Ygern. Bellicent, Queen of Orkney, daughter of Gorlois and Ygern, comes to Leodogran's court and is asked if Arthur can hold his own. She tells of the enthusiasm of his knights. His three queens, who will help him at his need, were present on the occasion Bellicent tells of. The Lady of the Lake who gave

Arthur the Sword stood beside him. She describes Excalibur which Arthur receives from out of the Lake. Leodogran asks if Bellicent is Arthur's sister. She thinks not. Leodogran asks of their first meeting. Bellicent tells of Arthur's comforting her when a child and of their childhood. She relates Bleys' story of Arthur's coming, which Merlin fails to confirm. She bids Leodogran give Guinevere to Arthur who is to gain fame and then not die, but pass. Leodogran sees a vision of Arthur victorious, and consents to give him Guinevere. Lancelot brings the princess to Arthur's court and she is married to the King. The knighthood sing a war-song in honour of the King. Arthur refuses tribute to Rome and fights. Arthur subsequently overcame the heathen in twelve great battles.

Gareth, youngest son of Bellicent, wishes to go to Arthur's court, where his brothers Gawain and Modred are. He approaches his mother on the subject and she treats him as a child. He urges that her

THE ROUND  
TABLE.  
Gareth and  
Lynette.

love keeps him from a worthy course. His wish is resisted by Bellicent. Gareth persists. The queen begs him to stay, marry, and comfort her till she grows old. Gareth replies that she offers him ignominy for fame. Bellicent urges him to wait till the doubt about Arthur's birth has cleared. Gareth would enter at once the service of the King who has made them free. She asks a proof of his obedience ere he asks the King to make him a knight. Gareth demands the proof. Bellicent asks him first to serve in Arthur's kitchen. She thought he would prefer to stay with her. He consents to go to serve disguised in the King's kitchen a year and a day. He lingered, but after a time rose in the morning and calling two of his followers set out. They set out disguised as countrymen. His companions suspect the city to be a vision. He laughs at their doubts and brings them to the gate. They are startled at the appearance of the gate. An old man

salutes them. Gareth tells that they are countrymen, and informs him of their doubts. The Seer makes a mystic answer. Gareth rebukes him for discourtesy. The Seer replies that Gareth is acting the imposter with his disguise. The Seer departs leaving Gareth perplexed. They enter Camelot. Gareth finds the King delivering judgment. A widow claims justice, saying the King's father Uther, had seized her late husband's land. The King offers land or gold; she takes land back. Arthur grants with the land gold for the use of land. Another widow clamors for a champion. A knight offers himself as champion. Sir Kay begs Arthur to refuse her clamorous petition. The King sends out the champion. A messenger comes from Mark, King of Cornwall, who sends a present and asks to be made a knight. Arthur refuses the request and has the gift destroyed. Other suppliants came and champions are despatched to their aid. Gareth asks for a place in the kitchen, His request is granted. Sir Kay is suspicious of Gareth. Sir Lancelot recognizes the nobility of Gareth. Sir Kay speaks churlishly to Lancelot. Gareth serves for a month in the kitchen. Bellicent sends to release him from his promise. Gareth rejoices and goes to the King. He asks to be made a knight in secret and given the first quest. Arthur tells him of the vows he must take. Gareth feels confident of keeping the vows. The King says Lancelot must know that Gareth is made knight. Gareth assents. The King hesitates. The King grants the demand, tells Lancelot, and bids him follow Gareth on the first quest. Lynette arrives with a grievance. The King asks her need. She tells how her sister is besieged and she asks Lancelot as a champion. The King asks about the knights who besiege her sister. They are Morning-Star, Noon-Sun, Evening-Star and Night. Gareth asks for the quest, and the King sends him forth. Lynette leaves the hall indignant. Gareth dons his armour and follows. Sir Kay, angry at Gareth's obtaining the quest, will follow. Sir Kay sets out in spite of a remon-

strance from Lancelot. Lynette lingers by the tourney-field still indignant, Gareth salutes her, is received with contempt, and Sir Kay comes up and summons him to return. Gareth refuses. Gareth overthrows Sir Kay and follows the flying Lynette. When overtaken she still refuses his assistance, in spite of his victory over Sir Kay. Gareth will succeed in the quest or die. Lynette throws doubt on his courage. She again flees, and is again overtaken. Lynette says she has followed a dangerous path. Gareth rescues a baron. He is asked to name his reward. He refuses reward but asks harbourage for Lynette. Lynette speaks contemptuously of Gareth's achievement, but accepts the harbourage. At the baron's Gareth is placed by Lynette, but she rises. She complains of discourtesy. The lord places Gareth at another board and sits down with him. The lord suggests that Gareth should return for Lancelot. Gareth expresses his resolution to proceed. Lynette and Gareth set out, and she suggests his return. He expresses his confidence. They come to the pavilion of the Morning-Star. The Morning-Star is armed. Lynette urges Gareth to flee. He protests against her contempt. The Morning-Star bids him be off. Gareth overthrows him. He sends the Morning-Star to Arthur's court. Lynette sets on followed by Gareth, who overtakes her and is treated with lighter scorn. She bids him fly from the second brother. He expresses his resolution to follow the quest. She expresses her hate. He claims her regard. She threatens him with danger. Gareth meets and defeats the Noon-Sun. He sends the vanquished to the King, but Lynette is still scornful. Lynette sings a love-song, and between the stanzas banters Gareth. They meet the Evening-Star. The new foe is clad in skins. Lynette warns the Evening-Star. He expresses his confidence, and Gareth accuses him of boastfulness. The Evening-Star is armed and fights, but is overthrown by Gareth. Lynette and Gareth ride together. She sings her love refrain. Lynette



asks pardon for her scorn. Gareth pardons her lightly. She tells him of a cavern where refreshment is to be had. Approaching the cavern they find the rocks carved with allegorical figures. Lancelot overthrows Gareth by mistake but then recognizes him. Gareth greets him. Lynette speaks petulantly to Lancelot and Gareth. Lancelot makes a conciliatory reply. They refresh themselves in the cavern, and Lynette expresses her apprehension lest Gareth love the glory of overcoming Night. Lancelot offers his shield and horse. Gareth awaking from a sleep into which he has dropped, takes Lancelot's shield, and they set out. Lynette tries to dissuade Gareth from fighting the fourth brother. Gareth is bold for the encounter. Lynette tells what she knows of Night, and urges Gareth to yield the quest to Lancelot. Gareth refuses. Lancelot advises Gareth. They come to Lyonors and the fourth brother at Gareth's third summons appears. Gareth addresses Death at whose silence all are dismayed. Death overthrown, turns out to be a mere boy. There are rejoicings at Lyonors. Sir Gareth weds Lynette.

The poet tells how Geraint had given himself up to his love for Enid and withdrawn from court and all manly enterprise. Enid mourned for this and lamented that she could not speak to him and rouse him from his effeminacy. Geraint overhearing her murmur she was no true wife, feared she had taken some taint from her friendship for the queen; he ordered their horses and bade Enid put on her worst and meanest dress, whereupon she arrayed herself in the faded silk she had worn when they first met.—The story goes back to the courtship of Geraint. At the previous Whitsuntide the queen and Geraint had waited on a knoll to see the king's hunt come up. A strange knight rode past, the queen sent to inquire and the information was insultingly refused. Geraint set out to avenge the

The Marriage  
of Geraint.

insult, and the queen gratefully promised to array his bride, ere he married, in gorgeous clothing. Geraint though unequipped for the field followed the stranger to his town. The stranger knight entered a fortress and passed down the street of the burg where preparations for a tournament were going forward. Geraint was welcomed by Earl Yniol. Led by his host, he enters the court of a ruined castle. Geraint is struck by hearing Enid singing a hopeful song. The knight meets the mother, and Enid, whom her father bids take the charger to the stable and seek provisions in the town. Geraint would have interfered, but at the old man's request forbore. Enid did the Earl's bidding, and prepared and served a meal. Geraint inquires whether the knight he has followed is the sparrow-hawk of whom he has heard the towns-people speak, tells Yniol his name and errand, and asks for arms. Yniol is rejoiced to find that his guest is Geraint, and tells of his nephew the sparrow-hawk. Geraint asks for arms. Old arms can be provided, but the knight's lady must be present at the tournament. Geraint asks leave to fight for Enid. Yniol sends the mother to learn Enid's inclination. The mother tells Enid the knight's desire, and in the morning the two women go to the lists. Geraint overturns the nephew, who gives his name as Edyrn. The third morning after, Enid, having promised to accompany Geraint to court, is dismayed at the pooriness of her apparel. Her mother brings her a fine costume. Her mother asks Enid if she recognizes the dress. Yes, it was a birthday present from her mother, stolen when their house was sacked, but now returned. The mother arrays Enid. At Geraint's request Enid resumes her former dress, and Geraint explains to her mother his reasons and the queen's promise. Geraint and Enid depart. Guinevere greets them and keeps her promise, and Dubric marries them.—The story now returns to the quarrel between Geraint and Enid. Enid kept the dress in which Geraint first saw her. And so

when Geraint bade her put on her poorest apparel, she dressed herself in it.

Many life-long troubles are caused by the misapprehension of facts. Geraint and Enid set out; Enid, forbidden to speak, rides before. Enid discovers an ambush. She determines to tell her lord. She informs him. He rebukes her for speaking and prepares to fight. Geraint overcomes his foes, places their armour on their horses and bids Enid drive these before her. Enid discovers a second ambush. She again determines to tell her lord. She informs him of the new danger. He rebukes her for speaking. He overcomes his foes. He takes the arms and horses and Enid drives these with the others. Geraint follows at shorter distance; the horses obeyed Enid's voice. They dine in the fields. He sends a messenger to secure accommodation for the night. The messenger goes on the errand. On the messenger's return they proceed to their chamber. Earl Limours, Enid's former suitor, visits Geraint. Limours after carousing, protests his love for Enid and wants to bear her from Geraint. Enid craftily seems to accept his offer. Limours departs for the time. Enid in the early morning tells Geraint of Limour's plot and they set out. Enid promises to obey and not speak. Geraint accepts the promise. He still suspects her. Geraint, warned by a gesture from Enid, overcomes Limours and his followers. They pass on. Geraint falls from a wound received in the contest. Enid binds up the wound. Many pass and offer her no help. Earl Doorm comes along and Enid asks for help. Geraint is borne to the earl's castle. Geraint regains consciousness but still acts as dead. Earl Doorm returns and offers to make Enid his countess. Enid prays him to desist from troubling her. The earl misunderstands her. She expresses her sorrow. Doorm urges her to eat and drink. She will not drink till Geraint recovers. The earl offers her fine

apparel. She refuses it. He strikes her on the cheek. She cries out. Geraint rises, kills the earl, and the people having fled, expresses his renewed faith in her. Her palfrey being lost, she mounts behind him and they ride away. Edyrn, coming with a message to Doorm from Arthur, meets them in the gateway. They set off for Arthur's camp. Edyrn tells Enid of the change in his character. The king receives them. Geraint is tended by Enid and the leech of Arthur. Arthur puts the land in order. On Geraint's recovery they passed to Caerleon where the queen received them and then to Devon where they lived, loved and respected by the people. Geraint never again mistrusted Enid, and finally fell fighting for the king.

The king bids his treasurer go to Pellam for tribute. The

Balin and  
Balan.

Baron asks if he will first go against two strange knights who stand as challengers near Camelot.

The King bids him not wait to overthrow them.

Arthur rides out and overthrows Balin and Balan. They are summoned to court, Sir Balin tells his story and is reinstated. Sir Balin is welcomed by the knights. Balan was knighted. The embassy returns with a reluctantly paid tribute. They bring word of a knight slain from behind by a demon. Balan claims the quest and, warning Balin to overcome his violent temper, rides away. Balin to overcome his savage disposition which had previously caused his exile from Camelot hovers about Lancelot and determines to seek a new cognizance from the Queen. Sir Balin is given the privilege of bearing Guinevere's crown-royal on his shield. He feels more in harmony with Arthur's court. At times he feels less in harmony. Once roused to anger he despairs of controlling himself. At length he seems at peace. Sir Balin sees the Queen and Lancelot conversing in a garden. Lancelot tells his dream. Guinevere tries to rouse him from sadness. After an interchange of glances they pass. He suspects them

and leaves Camelot abruptly. He rides to the hall of Pellam. Garlon, son of Pellam, scorns Balin's cognizance. Balin controls himself with difficulty. Next morning he strikes Garlon down and escapes to the woods. Ashamed of his violence, he hangs his shield on a branch. Vivien comes singing a song against asceticism. She tells her squire the king's faith will be overcome by another worship. She discovers the shield and Sir Balin and asks guidance to Arthur's court. Balin will not go to court having disgraced the queen's cognizance by his violence. Vivien tells a lying tale of Lancelot and Guinevere. Balin is deceived. He tramples on the shield. Balan draws near and mistaking Balin for the demon, spurs against him; they are both overthrown and swoon away. The squire removes their helmets. Vivien leaves them for dead. The brothers reviving recognize each other. Balin tells what has happened. Balan tells his brother that Vivien is false. Balin sorrowfully bids Balan farewell. Balan says farewell and they lie dead in each others arms.

In the woods of Broceliande Vivien lay at Merlin's feet. At the court of Mark a minstrel had sung of Lancelot's devotion to the queen. Answering a question from Vivien the minstrel added that this example of pure devotion was followed by many at Arthur's court. Mark suggested that Vivien go to the court to try her wiles upon the knights. Vivien accepts the mission. Guinevere is asked at Camelot by Vivien for a place among her maidens. Guinevere bids her wait until she return from hawking with Lancelot. Vivien observes Lancelot and Guinevere. They ride away hawking. Vivien contaminates Arthur's hall. Afterwards she steals from court. Having in vain attempted the king, she fixed her attentions on Merlin. Merlin is seized with an apprehensive melancholy. He goes to the Breton Coast and then to the wood of Broceliande and Vivien followed hoping to bind him with a spell. Vivien tries to ensnare the

Merlin and  
Vivien.

enchanter with her blandishments and Merlin asks what boon she requires. She welcomes his speech after long silence. Merlin tells her of his apprehensions. Vivien asks him to teach her the spell. He bids her ask some other boon. Vivien sings a song asking him to have full faith in her. Merlin is moved but tells of a manlier strain that stirred him once. Vivien complains of her loss of name in following him and continues her song. Vivien prefers love to fame. Merlin prefers usefulness to fame. Vivien speaks petulantly accusing him of making ill use of his charm. Merlin needed no aid of magic in his youth. Merlin begins a legend of the east. Vivien playfully interrupts him. Vivien creates a diversion. Merlin concludes the legend. Vivien says she will discover the secret charm. He tells her she could not read the charm. Vivien speaks angrily of Arthur's knights. Merlin asks for definite charges. She accuses Sir Valence. Merlin exonerates him. She accuses Sir Sagamore. Merlin tells the true story. Vivien accuses Sir Percivale. Merlin defends him. She attacks the queen and Lancelot. Merlin puts by the charge. Vivien slurs the king. Merlin is disgusted, but Vivien, misunderstanding his mood, defames the whole court. Merlin meditates on Vivien's slanderous speeches and wearies of her. Vivien catching the half-muttered tones of his contempt makes a passionate outcry. She regrets her love given in vain. She comes at his bidding back to the shelter of the tree but again stands off asserting her innocence. She bids the lightning strike her dead if she has schemed against his peace. The lightning falls and Vivien in fear seeks Merlin's protection and the enchanter yielding tells her the charm. Vivien flees.

Elaine keeps the shield of Lancelot. Lancelot had gone to joust for the great diamond. Arthur found the  
Lancelot and  
Elaine. diamonds at Lyonnesse. Arthur established a contest for the jewels and Lancelot won eight of the nine diamonds. Lancelot tells the king he will not joust for

the ninth. The queen upbraids Lancelot. Guinevere shows the danger of scandal. How can Lancelot go to joust after saying he would not? Guinevere meets the difficulty. Lancelot loses his way, wanders to Camelot and is received. Lancelot prays them to lend him a shield and not ask his name. Lancelot will have Sir Torre's shield. Lavaine is to joust at Camelot according to the father. Lavaine tells Elaine's dream and asks to go to Camelot. Lancelot welcomes his company and they converse about the diamond. Elaine loves Lancelot. They converse of the court and the wordless man. Lancelot talks of Arthur's wars. After lighter talk they retire and in the morning Lancelot takes Elaine's token, leaves her his shield, and with Lavaine rides away. They go to a hermit's near Camelot. Lancelot gives Lavaine his name. They find the king seated at the lists. Lancelot fights on the weaker side. He is wounded by his kin. Lancelot is declared victor. He is taken to the hermit's and lies in danger of death. Arthur sends Gawain with the diamond in search of the winner. Gawain with seeming courtesy receives the mission. Guinevere tells Arthur that the winner is Lancelot. Arthur tells Guinevere of Lancelot's mishap and of the token worn by him. Guinevere is jealous. Gawain seeks in vain for Lancelot, wanders to Astolat and leaves the diamond with Elaine. Gawain leaves Astolat. He tells the king what he has done. The king rebukes him. Rumours spread through the court about Lancelot and Elaine. Elaine induces her father to let her go to Lancelot. She finds Lancelot at the hermit's. Elaine nurses Lancelot back to health. Elaine despairs of gaining his love. They return to Astolat and Elaine declares her love and meets an unsatisfactory response. She swoons away. Her father asks Lancelot to treat her discourteously. Lancelot rides away without saying farewell. They try to comfort Elaine. Elaine makes and sings the song of Love and Death. They find her singing. Elaine asks to go up

the river to Camelot. Her father tries to quiet her. Sir Torre speaks harshly of Lancelot. Elaine defends him. The father tells her of Lancelot's love for the queen. She refuses to believe and asks for a confessor. After the priest is gone Lavaine writes a letter for Elaine, and she asks her father to let the dumb man row her after she is dead to Camelot with the letter in her hand. The father promises, and ten days after Elaine dies, her body is borne to the river and then the wordless man rows the funeral barge towards Camelot. Lancelot goes to present the diamonds to Guinevere. He presents them. Guinevere coldly receives the diamonds. She expresses her jealousy. She casts the diamonds into the flood just as the funeral barge appears. The people are struck with wonder. By Arthur's command Elaine is borne to the hall. Arthur reads her letter. The courtiers are touched. Lancelot speaks in explanation. Replying to the queen Lancelot tells what he did to soothe Elaine. Arthur suggests a worthy burial. Elaine is buried with honour, and the queen craves Lancelot's pardon. Arthur regrets that Lancelot could not love Elaine. Lancelot admits her worthiness. Lancelot is in sorrow. He knew not he would die a holy man.

Sir Percivale turned monk. He forms a friendship with Ambrosius. Ambrosius asks Percivale why he left the court. Percivale says the vision sent him from the world. Ambrosius is curious about the Holy Grail. Percivale tells what the Holy Grail is and its story. Ambrosius has heard something of it. Percivale describes his sister who first saw the vision. She got the desire to see the Holy Grail from her confessor. His sister describes her vision to Percivale. Percivale tells others, who fast and pray. Galahad was much moved when he heard of the vision. There were different rumors of Galahad's origin. The nun gives Sir Galahad a belt and urges him to seek the

The Holy  
Grail.



Holy Grail. Merlin had left an enchanted chair. Galahad sits in the chair. The Holy Grail is seen. Many swear to follow the Grail. Ambrosius asks if Arthur swore. Arthur was absent but he got an inkling of the Grail. Arthur's hall is described. The interior is described. The king arrives at the hall and asks the cause of the disturbance. Arthur is displeased on hearing of the vows. Percivale tells the king he saw enough to make him desire to see all. They all tell the king they have not seen it. Arthur asks what they seek. Galahad says he saw the Grail. The king predicts failure for the majority. A tourney is held at which Galahad and Percivale are victors. The knights set out. Percivale is confident. He is seized with doubts. He tries to satisfy his yearning with the joys of sense. Domestic peace fails to satisfy him. Fame is not sufficient. He finds power vain. Percivale learns humility and meets Galahad who has seen the Grail continually. Percivale and Galahad travel together. Galahad passes away and Percivale sees the Grail. Ambrosius inquires what persons Percivale met on his quest. Percivale tells how he had fallen from his vow. Ambrosius thinks he should have married the lady. Percivale tells he met Sir Bors who had seen Lancelot riding madly. Sir Bors grows indifferent through his sympathy for Lancelot. Sir Bors sees the Grail. Ambrosius can remember Sir Bors. Percivale tells of the return. Arthur asks Percivale if he has seen the Grail. Percivale tells of his quest, and is resolved to leave the court. The king turns to Gawain. Gawain has given up. Sir Bors tells of his success. When the rest have reported Arthur asks Lancelot of his success. Lancelot tells of his terrible quest and partial success. Gawain speaks contemptuously of their undertaking. Arthur reproves him and defends the others. He reproves the despair of Lancelot and urges him to hope. The king sums up the results of the quest. Arthur thinks it best for him and for most to live

in the world ; thus a knowledge may come that surpasses even visions.

Pelleas comes to Arthur. He is made knight. Pelleas lies meditating in the forest of Dean. He is roused by the presence of a party. Ettarre asks the way. Pelleas is abashed. Ettarre laughs at him. She upbraids his awkwardness. He offers to guide her to Caerleon where a tournament is to be held. She treats him graciously in the hope he may win the prize for her. Ettarre asks Pelleas to fight for her. He promises. Pelleas rejoiced, swears to love Ettarre only. Pelleas is enthusiastic over the court and king. Pelleas wins the sword and gold circlet. Ettarre crowns herself with the circlet. Guinevere remonstrates with Ettarre for her coldness towards Pelleas. On the way home Pelleas is kept from Ettarre and is shut out of her castle. He takes it as a trial of his devotion. Ettarre's knights are overthrown by Pelleas. He overcomes them a second time and Ettarre orders them to bind him and bring him in. Pelleas allows himself to be brought in. He expresses his devotion. She has him contemptuously thrust out. She sends her knights to fight him all at once. Gawain passing, offers to help him, but Pelleas refuses his aid. Gawain impatiently forbears. Pelleas overthrows them, they bear him in ; Ettarre orders him to be thrust out and Pelleas promises not to return. Ettarre relents somewhat but thrusts him out. Gawain unfastens his bonds and remonstrates with him. Pelleas explains that it is his lady that maltreats him. Gawain offers to intercede for Pelleas. Pelleas accepts the offer. Gawain goes to the castle. Gawain announces that he has slain Pelleas. He is received. Pelleas waits till the third night. Pelleas is distrustful. A love song. He goes to the castle. He discovers Gawain's faithlessness. He determines to slay them. He lays the sword across their throat and leaves them sleeping. He

rides away in a frenzy. Ettarre finds the sword and her heart turns to Pelleas. Pelleas rides till dawn, then sleeping, dreams of disaster to the Round Table. Sir Percival throws doubt on Guinevere. Pelleas loses faith in the court. He rides wildly toward Camelot. He meets Lancelot and is overthrown by him. They go singly to the court; Pelleas flees, leaving the others conscious of approaching doom.

Sir Tristrem the day after the jousts meets Dagonet, the fool. Once Arthur found a child and a carcanet  
The Last  
Tournament. of rubies, the child having died, Guinevere gave Arthur the jewels for a tourney prize. The king enquired why she did not wear the diamonds given her by Lancelot. She said they had slipped from her hand into the river but better luck would attend these jewels. A tournament was proclaimed. A maimed churl staggers into the king's hall before the day of the tournament. The king asked the cause of his injuries. The churl told of the ill-deeds and words of the red knight. The king determined to lead out his younger knights and leave Lancelot to preside at the tournament. Lancelot reluctantly agreed. The king feared his knights were degenerating. Arthur departed against the red knight. On the morning of the tournament Lancelot occupied the royal chair. He found the ladies clothed in white in honor of the dead innocence. Sir Tristrem won and the tournament was conducted without courtesy. Sir Lancelot yielded the prize to Tristrem. Sir Tristrem's queen of beauty was not present. The day closed darkly, but it was proposed to hold a brilliant solemnity at night. The queen cut short the gay festivity. The day after the tournament Dagonet jests with Tristrem about the knight's love for Queen Isolt. Tristrem sings a love-song. Tristrem complains that the fool does not dance to his music. Dagonet speaks with sly contempt of the song. Tristrem speaks severely of the fool.

The fool replies ending with an allusion to Orpheus. Tristrem recalls Orpheus' rescue of Eurydice. The fool says Tristrem harps his wife down. Tristrem in answer to Dagonet, says he knows Arthur's constellation. The fool accuses the knight of degrading the court. The king, according to the fool, has attempted the impossible. Tristrem goes to give the prize to Queen Isolt. He recalls the time when Mark robbed him of Isolt. Tristrem considers how he may excuse his marriage to Queen Isolt. He dreams of the two Isolts.—Arthur meets the red knight. The red knight and his forces are overthrown. All the ways are safe but the king is joyless.—Tristrem proceeding, reaches Tintagil. He is greeted by the queen. She warns him against Mark. He kneeling before her she asks what lady he has knelt to last? He answers Guinevere. He prefers Isolt's beauty to Guinevere's. She accuses him of having deceived her. He complains of her mood. She speaks of Isolt, his bride. He defends himself. The queen tells how she received the news of his marriage. The queen asks Tristrem to swear to love her always. Tristrem objects to the oath. What if she turned her love to Lancelot? Tristrem calls for refreshment. They eat, drink, and are reconciled. Tristrem plays and sings. He shows the carcanet which Isolt thinks the collar of some new order. Tristrem says it is the tourney-prize brought for her. As he is fastening it about her neck, Mark surprises and kills him. That night King Arthur returns to Camelot and finds the Queen gone.

Guinevere has fled to Almesbury. Modred has caused her flight. Lancelot had once given Modred cause  
Guinevere. to hate him. The Queen was full of apprehensions and bid Lancelot go to his own land. Modred surprised them saying farewell, and Lancelot retired to his own land and Guinevere to Almesbury. She was received, her name unasked. Guinevere spends many weeks among

the nuns, attended by a little novice. The novice sings "Too late." The Queen weeps. The novice seeks to console her by speaking of the king's grief. The Queen asks if she has not cause for grief if Lancelot has supplanted her lord? Yes, the Queen's disloyalty is grief to all women. What does the novice know of the Round Table? The novice tells what her father had told of the court before the Queen came. Guinevere asks if there was no prophecy of ill. Yes, a bard had refused to tell his vision of the Queen's fate. The Queen grows suspicious of the novice, who asks pardon for her loquacity, and asks Guinevere of the King and Lancelot. Guinevere compares them. The novice thinks if manners are the outcome of character the king's manners must have been nobler than Lancelot's. Guinevere defends Lancelot. The novice thinks "Guinevere's" bearing could not be so noble as her interlocutor's. The Queen thinking herself played upon drives the novice away. Guinevere meditates upon her meeting with Lancelot. The King comes. He places her sin before her. Arthur pauses in his speech. He forgives her and says farewell. He blesses her. He departs. Guinevere expresses her love for Arthur. She asks to be made a sister. She came to be Abbess and after three years of devotion died.

Sir Bedivere tells the story of the passing of Arthur.

The Passing  
of Arthur.

Bedivere heard Arthur moaning in his tent. Arthur lamented the apparent failure of his work. The King in a dream was warned of his passing, by Gawain. Bedivere cheered Arthur and urged him on. The King found it hard to fight against his own knights. Arthur fought his last battle. All the Christians and heathens were slain. The King, whiter than the mist, addressed Bedivere. Arthur was King among the dead. Bedivere told Arthur Modred still lived unharmed. The King slew Modred. Bedivere bore the King to a chapel near the

field. Arthur ordered Bedivere to fling Excalibur into the lake. Bedivere promised to do so. Bedivere went to the lake. Bedivere concealed the sword and returned to the King. Arthur enquired what had taken place. Bedivere evaded the enquiry. Arthur reproached Bedivere. The Knight returned to the lake but found reasons for again disobeying. He again hid Excalibur and returned to Arthur. The King once more made inquiries. Bedivere was again evasive. Arthur angrily reproached the Knight and sent him on the errand a third time. Bedivere threw Excalibur and it was received. Arthur asked Bedivere what had occurred. Bedivere told him what he had done and seen. Arthur bade the Knight bear him to the margin of the lake. Bedivere took Arthur up and bore him over the field. They reached the lake. They saw a dusky barque crowded with stately forms. Arthur was received by three Queens on the barge. Bedivere expressed his grief. Arthur spoke a parting word to Bedivere. The barge departed. Bedivere was conscious of his loss. He had some hope that the King might come again. Bedivere thought he could hear echoes of Arthur's reception in another world. The barge vanished into light and a new day began.

The poet assures the queen of his loyalty, begs her to accept  
EPILOGUE TO  
THE QUEEN. for the Prince Consort's sake this tale shadowing  
 Sense at war with Soul. He adds his blessing,  
 and good wishes for the Queen and Country.

The loss which led to the writing of Tennyson's *In  
 Memoriam* is well known (see pages 11 *et seq.*).  
In Memoriam. This elegy has been differently regarded by different critics. M. Taine passes it over most contemptuously, and in a scoffing passage alludes to Mr. Tennyson as weeping in a proper manner over his friend's grave and drying his eyes with a cambric handkerchief. Thomas Davidson says of it: "*In Memoriam* is the record of the shattering and

rebuilding of a moral world in a man's soul; it belongs to the same class of work as the *Divine Comedy* and *Faust*." John F. Genung believes that "when the poem emerged from its long period of secret growth it became at once the mould which, beyond any other single work of literature, has till this day given shape to the religious thought of the time;" thereby assigning it a power somewhat analogous to that which Matthew Arnold assigns to the Essays of Emerson. In spite of his distaste for vulgar enthusiasm Stopford Brooke says, "Surely while the language of England lasts, so long will *In Memoriam* be read;" continuing he says, "It is a song of victory and life arising out of defeat and death; of peace which has forgotten doubt; of joy whose mother was sorrow, but who has turned his mother's heart into delight." Some critics seem to have avoided dealing with the piece because of mingled feelings concerning it. Many have reviled it in terms less polished than those of M. Taine.

Probably the poem will always find severe censors; there are certain temperaments to whom its morbid subjective analysis, its expressions of feeling toward a man which Englishmen rarely use, its hysterical grief and brooding, must necessarily appear distasteful, unmanly, exaggerated. There are others to whom his faith in the teachings of his heart, and his disregard of mere intellect in the solution of infinite problems, must always seem illogical and unsatisfactory. In spite of the fact that as an elegy the poem is appropriately clothed in the monotonous regularity of this endless succession of quatrains, there will always be some who will wish there had been some changes of movement such as occur in the great funeral marches. On the other hand many fine scholars, and broad, able, and noble men have declared these criticisms paltry, shallow, or false, and it is highly probably that the time will never come when those whose lives and characters lead them to exalted speculations,

and moral idealism, philosophers, theologians, students, of both sexes, will cease to study this work sedulously and to think of it with emotion.

It is impossible to master even the line by line meaning of the poem without the most minute attention and prolonged effort—to grapple with the unity and coherence of the whole work is impossible for any one without months and years of labour, supported by capacity and general culture. In the elementary abstract which follows there is an attempt made to supply the earnest beginner with the means of mastering the central thought of each separate lyric—and nothing further has been attempted: though it is hoped that those who receive no further academic training in the author will continue to strive after a complete comprehension of the piece as a whole.

It is suggested that the student read a lyric of the *In Memoriam* over thoughtfully, then read the corresponding section of the abstract, then read the lyric again. In many instances it may be necessary to repeat this process before the central idea breaks clearly upon the mind.

In the introduction the poet invokes the Son of God, and professes faith in Him as the Master of the earth and the heavenly bodies, and of life and death. He trusts that human aspirations for infinite things may not prove idle. He confesses that the doctrine of free-will is puzzling, but is clear that we should conform our conduct to an ideal. All systems of human knowledge are fragmentary and relative, and in the Son of God all these systems occur as phases. The poet prays that we may never be guilty of undue pride of intellect, but retain the simple spirit of a reverent child. In a deeply humble and apologetic strain he offers the verses that follow as a reverent tribute to the Master of his faith and aspirations.

ABSTRACT OF IN  
MEMORIAM.



## I.

Great griefs are blessings in disguise, but it is difficult to pierce the disguise; it is better to be faithful to a dead love, though the sorrow be terrible, than to gain peace by the faithlessness of forgetting.

## II.

He addresses the Yew tree, and complains that the whole busy world lives and moves in the shadow of this emblem of death; the tree impresses him so that his spirit seems to take in the gloom of death itself.

## III.

His grief in its early violence brought doubts of the goodness, beauty and wisdom of God and Nature. Should not such grief be crushed?

## IV.

In sleep when his will is in abeyance, his grief is so great that it seems his heart will break—but when morning brings vigour to the will he finds his night emotions foolish and unmanly.

## V.

The poet is disturbed by a feeling of shame at the thought of exposing his wounded heart in verse; but he says that writing verses soothes him, and after all no words can expose the depths of his heart.

## VI.

The poet finds no comfort in well-meant commonplaces about the commonness of death. A father loses his soldier-son, a mother her sailor-boy, and they know no more of the deplorable truth at the moment when it occurs than the poet knew of his loss of a friend to whom he was in the very act of writing a loving letter: it is so too with a girl who expects her lover and has no subtle warning, but is gladly preparing to meet him at the moment when an accident removes him.

## VII.

The poet pays a doleful visit to the house in Wimpole street where Hallam had lived while working at law in London.

## VIII.

The poet finds the world as flat and uninteresting now as a lover would find the home of his beloved after her departure. As the lover might find and prize a flower which she had cared for, so Tennyson prizes his poetry still because Hallam had been fond of it.

## IX.

The poet addresses the ship which conveys the remains of Hallam to England, and wishes it a fair and speedy voyage.

## X.

The poet in fancy sees the ship approaching land with its passengers and its sacred burden. It seems to him that, though heaven is as near by sea as by land, it is yet sweeter to have one's friend buried beneath the clover of the village churchyard, than buried at sea.

## XI.

The poet describes the beautiful calm of a perfect Autumn morning. He notes the calm in every feature of the landscape, and finds an analogy in the calm despair and grief of his own mind, and in the dead calm of the noble breast of Hallam.

## XII.

The poet in his longing to be near the ship flies to it in fancy and utters his cry of woe and despair that such a separation should be the apparent end of his friendship.

## XIII.

He compares his tears to those of a widower who dreams of seeing his recently lost wife; but the poet wishes he could have

a vivid waking realization of his loss, which as yet seems unreal and fanciful.

## XIV.

So little does kind Nature allow him to feel the reality of his trouble, that he declares he would not feel it strange if Hallam were yet to return in life and without change.

## XV.

The poet describes the insupportable stress and rage of a stormy Autumn evening. If it were not for fancies which assure him that the ship is sailing through fair weather, he would be quite overcome by the oppression of the scene: if he could have trusted his fancies fully he would have loved to watch the storm.

## XVI.

The poet is struck by the inconsistency of his moods in the eleventh and the fifteenth lyrics: he suggests two explanations, first, that his moods of calm and storm play on the surface of a deep ocean of sorrow; second, that his mind had been frenzied and unharmonized by the shock of grief.

## XVII.

The poet welcomes and blesses the ship: in all its future voyages it will be attended by his prayers and made fortunate by happy influences.

## XVIII.

The poet feels that it is something to have Hallam's body buried in English earth; but even the comfort of his burial is attended by a wild desire to take the place of the dead.

## XIX.

The poet observes the tide in the river near his friend's grave. When the tide is full the river is still, when the tide ebbs the river exhibits sound and foam. So with the poet's heart which finds expression only when it finds comparative relief.

## XX.

His lighter moods are compared to the grief of servants for their dead lord, his deeper moods to the silent anguish of the children who can find no expression for their loss.

## XXI.

The poet is charged with an unmanly indulgence of grief to the exclusion of his public duties. He replies that as a child of Nature he must express his feelings in song as a bird does.

## XXII.

He relates the cause of his song of sorrow. After four years of happy friendship, his friend entered the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He disappeared leaving in the poet no desire but to follow him.

## XXIII.

Death will of course solve his doubts and end his sorrows ; but the journey toward death is not pleasant and interesting as it was, and as it would be, were Hallam his companion still.

## XXIV.

The poet questions himself as to whether he is not exaggerating his former happiness. Is it not idealized by contrast or by distance ?

## XXV.

He replies that of course his friendship was not free from human troubles : but mutual love seems to endear the very troubles.

## XXVI.

He will always travel the future time mournfully. He would rather die before morning than live to learn that time turns love into indifference.

## XXVII.

The peace and happiness conferred by weakness of feeling, coarseness of sensation, ignorance or inexperience, he does not wish to have. Suffering is better than peace at such prices.

## XXVIII.

It is the first Christmas Eve after Hallam's death. The poet listens to the rise and fall of the sound of the bells of the churches of four neighbouring villages. They mingle his former happiness with his present sorrow.

## XXIX.

When the poet thinks what Hallam used to be in their Christmas festivities, it seems impossible to keep up those festivities now. But *use* and *want* are two aged sisters, themselves not far from death: and they should not be cheated of their dues.

## XXX.

The attempt to keep up the customary festivities is a dismal failure. Some one sings a favourite song of Hallam's and they all weep. But when they sing a song of things eternal and everlasting, there is a renewal of hope and consolation with which to greet Christmas.

## XXXI.

The experiences of Lazarus engross the poet's imagination. What were the feelings of Lazarus? Did Mary afterwards ask him whether he had known how she had been sorrowing over his loss? Would it not have been better if we had known the story more completely? But no doubt joy at the return of Lazarus had swallowed up curiosity as well as grief.

## XXXII.

In the heart of Mary a great love and a simple grateful trust made doubt and curiosity irrelevant and impossible. Is not

this the best attitude toward the mysterious infinities of life and death?

## XXXIII.

Keen sceptical intellects may attain a belief less covered by mere symbols: but such will do well not to disturb the faith of those who believe firmly through fable and symbol. The abstract faith is hardly a sure practical guide at all times even to the wise.

## XXXIV.

He sometimes questions immortality himself: but he feels sure of this, that if there is no future life this life is a worthless delusion.

## XXXV.

But is this certain? If we grant that immortality is not to be expected, would we not still prize life on account of love in this existence? No, because if death meant annihilation we could not really love: we could only live in dread and horror. Only the lowest kind of love would be possible with such a prospect.

## XXXVI.

Jesus was the greatest teacher: inasmuch as he made simple to the commonest minds a system of philosophy and ethics most comprehensive, subtle, and sublime. This he did by making the system concrete in his own life. No poet, even Shakespeare, has accomplished such a feat of teaching.

## XXXVII.

The poet feels humbly unworthy to deal with divine and infinite topics. The Muse of Tragedy is unfit for the discussion of infinite concerns: these belong only to a muse of divine infinities such as Urania. Yet since Hallam loved such topics he ventures to speak of them, as he can, in this elegy.

## XXXVIII.

But the peace that came to the poet in the thought of revealed truth dies away again and there seems no peace in any consideration, though it is Spring. There is a little comfort in the fancy that Hallam may listen to his singing.

## XXXIX.

The Spring gives vitality and buds even to the sullen Yew. This is a symbol of Hope. But sorrow warns him that Winter follows Spring, and grief will return to his heart.

## XL.

The poet compares the departed friend to a maiden who marries and leaves home to assume the higher duties of wife and mother. But the contrast is more striking than the likeness. The bride returns at times to her parents—the dead never return to their friends.

## XLI.

Hallam's mind had always been so exalted as to prevent his friend from feeling himself on the same level. But now Hallam is leaving him far far below and behind. The poet is troubled with the fear that he will never be able to overtake Hallam in their progress through the lives to come.

## XLII.

Hallam taught him much here ; he may be his teacher hereafter. They will be equal in love. It is a supreme pleasure to learn from a wise and loving person whom one loves.

## XLIII.

May there not be an interval of sleep between death and judgment? In that case Hallam and the poet will rise together and enjoy their friendship almost as if there had been no break in it.

## XLIV.

The dead may be too busy and happy to remember the past on earth : if Hallam ever receives a hint or suggestion to think of the poet, the poet hopes he will do his utmost to follow up the hint and learn what he can of him.

## XLV.

Possibly the great object of the life on earth is to develop the sense of identity : if so, it is not to be believed that this sense will perish at death.

## XLVI.

Looking back over life as a unity, from the vantage ground of the future state, the poet trusts to find the whole of his earthly existence coloured by his love for Hallam—not merely the five years of their companionship.

## XLVII.

There is an oriental belief that at death we may lose individuality and become again a part of the central life of the world. This belief is vague and disagreeable to the poet. Human love seeks to meet friends after death, at least long enough to say farewell.

## XLVIII.

These poems are merely intended as philosophical poetry, not as a poetical philosophy. They are expressions of emotion concerning various subjects, not scientific solutions of profound problems.

## XLIX.

Let the poet say what he can of the great problems of art and knowledge, he yet does not express his deeper thoughts and feelings. The deepest thoughts he expresses are mere ripples on the deep sea of his tears.



## L.

The poet invokes the spirit of Hallam to be near him in the troubles of life, and above all in death, to pilot him to the next world.

## LI.

The poet questions whether he really desires the dead to scrutinize his inmost soul. He declares he wrongs the dead when he questions thus: the dead have piercing vision but great charity.

## LII.

The poet fears that if his professions of love for the dead were more than mere words their sincerity would appear in his living more like his ideal. He imagines Hallam saying: Do not make light of your professions of love because you do not live as if I were your ideal: no ideal can insure perfection in the disciple—not even the life of Jesus: in time the faults will disappear.

## LIII.

It sometimes appears that strong natures are none the worse for having “sown their wild oats;” but it is a dangerous doctrine for the young, and may blunt any man’s perception of moral questions.

## LIV.

The poet expresses his trust in the final victory of good forces: he trusts that all things work together for good. But he feels incompetent to foretell, or to judge.

## LV.

Is not our yearning for immortality the most divine spark in us? But does not Nature cruelly contradict our hopes by caring only for the fate of the type or species, and not at all for the mere individual? Nothing is left but a weak and injured faith.

## LVI.

But is Nature careful even of the species? No! Then Nature does not ensure man's immortality. Man may perish as other species have perished before him. The poet wishes his friend could tell him the truth now; but the truth will come only after death.

## LVII.

The poet's speculations have brought him to a state of mind in which he can neither go on with his writing, nor go back to his work in the world. He is doomed to think constantly of his loss. He resolves to leave the subject he has been writing about.

## LVIII.

He has said farewell. But his muse prompts him to resume his task in the hope of making a nobler ending.

## LIX.

The poet invokes Sorrow to become his bride. He wishes her to be ever near, but to be concealed so that some may not know he is wedded to Sorrow. He would be cheerful externally.

## LX.

The poet compares his love for the glorified Hallam to the love of some poor girl for one of higher rank. She is miserable and jealous, and blames herself for aspiring foolishly.

## LXI.

Hallam among the immortals sees how small the poet is: but he loved Hallam, and that makes him in a sense as great as the greatest of them. Even the Shakespeare of the sonnets was incapable of greater devotion.

## LXII.

But if this simple early love embarrasses Hallam in his new companionship, the poet would be forgotten.

## LXIII.

But why might not Hallam spare to him such love as he himself spared to the lower animals?

## LXIV.

Hallam may now regard Tennyson as some great and successful man who has risen from humble circumstances might regard an old playmate who had spent his life on the farm.

## LXV.

The poet in a more confident mood hopes that his friend will remember their friendship effectually—and even feel that he derived good influences from it.

## LXVI.

Sorrow has not embittered him: he has the kindness of a blind person who is affectionately and even playful though in eternal gloom.

## LXVII.

Going to rest, the moonlight on his bed suggests Hallam's memorial marble; as he awakes at dawn he is reminded of the tablet.

## LXVIII.

In sleep he sees Hallam but not as dead. He seems to be alive, but his face expresses a trouble—a reflection in truth of the poet's own mood.

## LXIX.

The poet has a mysterious dream. He wears a crown of thorns. He is ridiculed. But an angelic form appears, speaks strange words, touches the crown to a victorious wreath.

## LXX.

When he is going to sleep he tries to recall the face of Hallam. But his active fancy sees so many figures that the face is

not distinct. In sleep without an effort the face comes out clearly.

## LXXI.

In sleep he has a dream of a summer in France with Hallam. He wishes a deeper sleep would complete the vivid dream.

## LXXII.

Sept. 15th, 1834. It is the first anniversary of Hallam's death. It is stormy, but even a fine day would have been equally gloomy. He wishes it past.

## LXXIII.

Hallam may have been needed in some other sphere. Fame is at best a poor thing to strive for, man should seek rather the inward developement that merits divine approbation.

## LXXIV.

As he reflects on Hallam, he sees clearly that he had the material that makes very great men.

## LXXV.

No words could do the qualities of Hallam justice—but in the poet's grief those qualities may be guessed. The world would be slow to believe in greatness before it had achieved great works. But Hallam is winning fame in some other sphere.

## LXXVI.

Earthly fame is fleeting. It is true the giant intellects of the ancients did produce work of some duration—but this poetry lives a shorter life than that of a tree.

## LXXVII.

There is little of the immortal in modern poetry—none in his own, yet he writes on: he writes to ease his heart—not for fame.

## LXXVIII.

It is the second Christmas after the fatal 15th Sept., 1833. It is a typical Christmas. There are the signs of mourning. But sorrow is unchanged—it has become a second nature.

## LXXIX.

He explains his saying that Hallam was dearer than his brothers by explaining that his brother and himself were alike, whereas Hallam seemed to supply his own defects.

## LXXX.

He endeavours to imagine how Hallam would have acted had their fates been reversed. He concludes that his conduct would have been calm and strong. He will endeavour to act accordingly.

## LXXXI.

If Hallam had lived the fruits of friendship would have been fuller, riper; but death matured the whole harvest at once.

## LXXXII.

He complains against death, not because of the horrors of the grave, not because of death's removing Hallam's power to another world, but because he and his friend are separated.

## LXXXIII.

The poet sings to Spring. He prays Spring to hasten with flowers and sweetness. In Spring he will sing more beautifully of his sorrow.

## LXXXIV.

The poet imagines what life would have been had Hallam lived and been wedded to his sister Emily. He fancies how he and Hallam would have lived in communion until death. But these are now idle dreams disturbing what little peace he has.

## LXXXV.

A friend writes the poet about his life and his capacity for new friendship. The poet replies that his sorrow has not affected his faith, heart, or ambition. He relates simply his loss. He desires new friends, but he cannot promise to love others as he loved and still loves Hallam.

## LXXXVI.

The poet feels some degree of peace for the first time: it comes after a showery day.

## LXXXVII.

The poet revisits the University and feels as he did when at College, and yet different. He recalls the society in which he often heard Hallam debate. He gives a vivid description of the brilliant young orator.

## LXXXVIII.

The poet asks the Nightingale how her song can be such a blending of infinite beauty with infinite sorrow: his own is similar.

## LXXXIX.

The poet's home is enriched with memories of the visits of Hallam; his visits were deeply enjoyable to all. The very memory of them is refreshing.

## XC.

The author expresses his lack of faith in those who suggest that the dead would be unwelcome were they to return. He longs to see his dead.

## XCI.

Spring and reviving life and hope make him almost see his desire fulfilled in broad daylight.

## XCII.

But if his desire were literally gratified would he believe? Would not the most convincing proofs be explained away as illusions or accidental coincidences?

## XCIII.

No, in the vulgar sense of ghosts, there are no ghosts; but may not the spirit return to commune with a friendly soul on earth?

## XCIV.

One thing is certain, if there is such a communion it can come only to the pure, peaceful and exalted nature. No angel of light would reveal itself to quacks and vicious natures.

## XCV.

On the lawn before his home, the poet and his friends spend a happy summer evening. The rest retire, and leave him alone. He reads the letters of Hallam: he wonders at the boldness, vigour, excellence of his mind. In this mood Hallam appears to him in spirit. After this trance the poet doubts the reality of the phenomenon, but overcomes his doubt. Dawn breaks: he is strong and sanguine.

## XCVI.

Some tender and trustful nature tells the poet that doubt is wicked in its nature. The poet relates how Hallam had doubts and overcame them, reaching through them a purer faith.

## XCVII.

Every natural object furnishes similitudes for his sad experiences. A figure that comes to mind is that of a simple, loving wife wedded to a famous and learned husband. They are vastly different, yet closely allied. The poet is like the wife, Hallam like the husband.

## XCVIII.

A friend is going to Vienna. The poet's mind turns to Austria and to the Rhine. Hallam told him of the beauty and gayety of the Austrian capital—but to the poet the very name will be always painful.

## XCIX.

It is the second anniversary of Hallam's death. Such is the power of grief in extending our sympathies that the poet feels himself in touch with his kind in all their joys and sorrows.

## C.

The poet and his friends are about to leave their childhood home. Every detail of the old place recalls Hallam. Leaving the place is like suffering the loss of Hallam a second time.

## CI.

The old home will not be loved by strangers as it is by themselves. In time new human associations will cluster around it; but the memory of the old times must fade first.

## CII.

As he is about to give up his home to strangers, he feels torn by contending griefs, first for the loss of the home, then for the loss of Hallam. Both griefs blend into one.

## CIII.

The night before they left their home, the poet had a beautiful dream. He was in a palace of art with several maidens (symbols of his poetic gifts); he is summoned to the sea. They move along a river to the sea. They all seem exalted and expanded as by divine power. They reach the ship—he greets his friend—but the maidens are not left behind.



## CIV.

The poet spends the Eve of the third Christmas after Hallam's death in his new home. There is but one bell instead of the four he was used to. Everything seems strange, new, and unhallowed.

## CV.

They had no inclination to keep Christmas even for form's sake. The poet wishes only for quiet thought and reflection: let there be no stir except the roll of those forces by which the wheels of the world itself drive onward.

## CVI.

The bells of New Year's Eve stir the poet to manly hope and faith: he would gladly see the evil of the world and the morbidness of his own heart give way to light and power and an ideal state.

## CVII.

On this birthday of his friend he is inclined to be cheerful. He wishes the day kept in joy and cheerfulness.

## CVIII.

The poet is becoming convinced that he must be more expansive and sympathetic, if he would reap the best results of his constancy and grief.

## CIX.

The contemplation of the fine gifts and the great wisdom of Hallam should keep him from unwise indulgence of grief. He should use his remembrance as an example.

## CX.

The poet describes the effect Hallam's influence had upon people of different ages and classes. As his nearest friend the poet used to receive a reflected brightness from Hallam. He will try to be more like him.

## CXI.

Others try to be, or to act like gentlemen. But Hallam was at heart more a true gentleman than any acts or words could give expression to.

## CXII.

Some wise person thinks poorly of the poet's judgment because he preferred the youthful powers of Hallam to the narrower perfectness of other men. But he replies that Hallam's powers though immature were miraculous.

## CXIII.

He is convinced that had Hallam lived he would have been a great force in the national life : at once firm and progressive.

## CXIV.

The poet praises knowledge, says more for knowledge than those can who worship her exclusively ; but points out that knowledge is after all only the means of achieving wisdom, which is a higher aim than mere knowledge.

## CXV.

Spring is in the air again and in the poet's blood. Regret at this season is beautiful as an April flower.

## CXVI.

His regrets are mingled with trust and hope : he begins to think less of the past and its broken ties, and more of the world to come with its renewal of affections and friendships.

## CXVII.

It may be that the years of sorrow and separation on earth are meant to intensify the pleasure of reunion hereafter.

## CXVIII.

The true idea of evolution is the idea of progress. The contemplation of the birth and growth of the world leads to a

belief in the growing dignity of man, and in the belief that the dead live and labour in other spheres of activity.

## CXIX.

On visiting the house in Wimpole street the second time, the poet sees the beauty of the country in the city, and is almost free from vain regret and morbid grief.

## CXX.

The poet in his renewed hope and trust declares his firm belief in immortality.

## CXXI.

Venus is at one time the evening star, at another the star of morning. The poet has been plunged into darkness and is now emerging into the light: yet his fundamental ideas are unchanged: his love for Hallam no less.

## CXXII.

In his sorrow the poet was aided by Hallam to throw off the yoke of matter and enter by inspiration into a common state with him. He desires to feel the same communion now when he is more cheerful and sanguine.

## CXXIII.

The eternal change of material nature raises doubts of immortality, but faith triumphs over these doubts: farewell in its darkest sense is unthinkable.

## CXXIV.

We cannot know infinite things through finite and ignorant understandings—but through the heart we can apprehend things which the reason is not able to cope with. We must trust our best instincts where reason cannot guide us.

## CXXV.

At the foundation this poem has always been a song of love and trust; the doubt and bitterness have really been expressed freely because of a deep hope and faith.

## CXXVI.

He has always rested his faith on the supremacy of the power of love. Though still in the world he has frequent intimations of the persistency of the mutual love of himself and his friend.

## CXXVII.

And now the poet's faith is so robust that he feels able to take a hopeful view of the progress of the race. Wars and revolutions there must be, but all will turn out well at last. The dead know this.

## CXXVIII.

The poet agrees with those who believe in human progress. Though much that is called progress is merely evanescent and even reactionary, yet progress is real and certain. Love and faith in progress are one.

## CXXIX.

The more the poet is dominated by love, the more he understands the world and its destiny: those who lose their illusions are not truly wise.

## CXXX.

Hallam had become diffused through Nature, so that he was identified with all in Nature that was truly beautiful: yet he had not lost his individuality.

## CXXXI.

The poem closes with a prayer for purity of heart and strength of faith in truths that never can be proved until we meet the dead and see things as they truly are.†

Cecilia, the poet's sister, was married in 1842 to Edmund Law Lushington, Professor of Greek at Glasgow. This epithalamium happily ends the *In Memoriam*, showing in a marked manner the restoration of the poet to a healthy interest in human affairs, and suggesting that new generations in days to come may work out the aspirations to which the poem has given utterance.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### AN ECLECTIC STUDY OF TENNYSON.

**General Estimate of Tennyson's Place in Literature.**—If a *plébiscite* were to pronounce to day on the question, "Who is the representative poet of the Victorian period?" it is possible that the votes might go in favour of Mr. Browning. Yet the fact is as certain as any fact can be—as certain as that Millais and not Watts, or Leighton, or Burne-Jones will be looked on as our representative painter—that Tennyson will remain the singer of the age. It is not the poet bringing the gift most needed by his own time who represents that time best; such a poet may be rejected by the age as an alien. It is he (to use the metaphor applied to another purpose by Mr. Gladstone) who gives back to his contemporaries as a river that which he has received from them as vapour.

—Dowden.

**Tennyson's Purpose.**—Tennyson is endowed precisely in points where Wordsworth wanted. There is no finer ear, nor more command of the keys of language. Color, like the dawn, flows over the horizon from his pencil in waves so rich that we do not miss the central form. Through all his refinements, too, he has reached the public—a certificate of good-sense and general power, since he who aspires to be the English poet must be as large as London—not in the same kind as London but in his own kind. But he wants a subject, and climbs no mount of vision to bring its secrets to the people. He contents himself with describing the Englishman as he is, and proposes no better.

—Emerson.

**Tennyson's Gifts.**—Of all the successors of Shelley he possesses the most sureness of insight. He has a subtle mind,

of keen, passionless vision. His poetry is characterized by *intellectual intensity* as distinguished from the intensity of feeling.

—Whipple.

**Tennyson's early love of beauty.**—He strayed through nature and history, with no foregone conclusions, without fierce passion, bent on feeling, relishing, culling from all parts, in the flower-stand of the drawing-room and in the rustic hedgerows, the rare or wild flowers whose scent or beauty could charm or amuse him. Men entered into his pleasure; smelt the grateful bouquets which he knew so well how to put together; preferred those which he took from the country; found that his talent was nowhere more at ease. They admired the minute observation and refined sentiment which knew how to grasp and interpret the fleeting aspects of things. In the *Dying Swan* they forgot that the subject was almost threadbare and the interest somewhat slight, that they might appreciate such verses as this:

“Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marsh green and still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.”

But these melancholy pictures did not display him entirely; men accompanied him to the land of the sun, towards the soft voluptuousness of southern seas; they returned with an involuntary fascination, to the verses in which he depicts the companions of Ulysses, who, slumbering in the land of the Lotus-Eaters, happy dreamers like himself, forgot their country, and renounced action.

Taine.



**The innocence, nobility, and charm of Tennyson.—**

Does any poet suit such a society better than Tennyson? Without being a pedant, he is moral; he may be read in the family circle by night; he does not rebel against society and life; he speaks of God and the soul, nobly, tenderly, without ecclesiastical prejudice; there is no need to reproach him like Lord Byron; he has no violent and abrupt words, extravagant and scandalous sentiments; he will pervert nobody. We shall not be troubled when we close the book; we may listen when we quit him, without being shocked by the contrast, to the grave voice of the master of the house, who reads evening prayers before the kneeling servants. And yet, when we quit him, we keep a smile of pleasure on our lips. The traveller, the lover of archæology, has been pleased by the imitations of foreign and antique sentiments. The sportsman, the lover of the country, has relished the little country scenes and the rich rural pictures. The ladies have been charmed by his portraits of women; they are so exquisite and pure! He has laid such delicate blushes on those lovely cheeks! He has depicted so well the changing expression of those proud or candid eyes! They like him because they feel that he likes them. He even honors them, and rises in his nobility to the height of their purity. Young girls weep in listening to him; certainly when, a little while ago, we heard the legend of *Elaine* or *Enid* read, we saw the fair heads drooping under the flowers which adorned them, and white shoulders heaving with furtive emotion. And how delicate was this emotion! He has not rudely trenched upon truth and passion. He has risen to the height of noble and tender sentiments. He has gleaned from all nature and all history what was most lofty and amiable. He has chosen his ideas, chiselled his words, equalled by his artifices, successes, and versatility of style, the pleasantness and perfection of social elegance in the midst of which we read him. His poetry is like one of those gilt and painted stands in

which flowers of the country and exotics mingle in artful harmony their stalks and foliage, their clusters and cups, their scents and hues. It seems made expressly for these wealthy, cultivated, free business men, heirs of the ancient nobility, new leaders of a new England. It is part of their luxury as well as of their morality; it is an eloquent confirmation of their principles, and a precious article of their drawing-room furniture.

—*Taine.*

**Tennyson's Clearness.**—Clearness in thought and words ought to be a part of a writer's religion; it is certainly a necessary part of his morality. Nay, to follow clearness like a star, clearness of thought, clearness of phrase, in every kind of life, is the duty of all. But the poets are most bound to feel and fulfil that duty, and it is not one of the least which belong to their art and their influence. Tennyson felt it and fulfilled it.

—*Stopford Brooke.*

**A Dreamer.**—It is very possible you may come across him in a country inn with a foot on each hob of the fireplace, a volume of Greek in one hand, his meerschaum in the other, so far advanced towards the seventh heaven that he would not thank you to call him back into this nether world. Wherever he is, however, in some still nook of enormous London, or the stiller one of some far-off sea-side hamlet, he is pondering a lay for eternity.

—*Howitt.*

**Carlyle's Opinion.**—I have heard them all speak of these London days when Alfred Tennyson lived in poverty with his friends and his golden dreams. He lived in the Temple, at 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, and elsewhere.

It was about this time that Carlyle introduced Sir John Simon to Tennyson one night at Bath House, and made the often-quoted speech, "There he sits upon a dung-heap surrounded by

innumerable dead dogs"; by which dead dogs he meant "CEnone" and other Greek versions and adaptations. He had said the same thing of Landor and his *Hellenics*. "I was told of this," said Lord Tennyson, "and some time afterward I repeated it to Carlyle: 'I'm told that is what you say of me.' He gave a kind of guffaw. 'Eh, that wasn't a very luminous description of you,' he answered."

—*Anne Thackeray Ritchie.*

**Carlyle's Luminous Description.**—Carlyle and Fitzgerald used to be often with Tennyson at that time. They used to dine together at the "Cock" tavern in the Strand, among other places; sometimes Tennyson and Carlyle took long solitary walks late in the night.

Here is Carlyle's description of the poet written to Emerson in America :—

"Tennyson came in to us on Sunday evening—a truly interesting son of earth and son of heaven. . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe. . . . A true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your soul can say Brother; a man solitary and sad as certain men are, dwelling in an atmosphere of gloom—*carrying a bit of Chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos.*"

—*Anne Thackeray Ritchie.*

**Tennyson's Brusqueness.**—A story is told of yet another reading of 'Maud,' when Tennyson turned to a lady at his elbow in the midst of the passage—

‘Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling.  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling’—

with the question, 'What birds are calling?' The lady willing to justify her taste for poetry, replied: 'Nightingales, I imagine.' 'Ugh!' said the poet with a shiver: 'what a cockney you are! Do nightingales cry "Mand"? Certainly not. But rooks do: "Caw, caw, caw, caw." It is very like it, at any rate.'

These rough little speeches were thoroughly characteristic of the man; and within the same year Henry Taylor recounts to his wife a very similar crudity. They were discussing at Lady Harriet Ashburton's the constancy of her friendship, the conversation resulting from the attention that lady was bestowing upon Tennyson. Henry Taylor recalled a friend (Professor Goldwin Smith) who, a year ago, had been the lion of her admiration, and wondered whether she would forget the poet, as she seemed to have forgotten her old friend. The discussion was growing warm, when Tennyson interrupted it. 'By what you say yourself,' he said, 'it appears that you don't show me any particular favours.'

But rougher than all these was his reputed reply to the wife of a Richmond clergyman, who wrote him, no doubt, an exasperating letter, begging him to explain a certain passage in one of his poems, which she had failed to understand. The answer came brief and brusque—

'DEAR MADAM,

I merely supply poetry to the English people—not brains.'

But his friends always understood that the rough manner concealed a genuine geniality.

—*Waugh.*

**Tennyson's Reading of his Own Poems.**—Reading, is it? One can hardly describe it. It is a sort of mystical incantation, a chant in which every note rises and falls and reverberates again. As we sit around the twilight room at Farringford, with its great oriel-window looking to the garden, across fields of hyacinth and self-sowed daffodils toward the sea where the waves wash against the rock, we seem carried by a

tide not unlike the ocean's sound; it fills the room, it ebbs and flows away; and when we leave, it is with a strange music in our ears, feeling that we have for the first time, perhaps, heard what we may have read a hundred times before.

—*Mrs. Ritchie.*

**Tennyson's Mysticism.**—‘I have never had any revelation through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better name) I have frequently had quite up from my boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come to me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to resolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was almost a laughable impossibility. The loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. . . . I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?’

—*Tennyson.*

**Tennyson contrasted with De Musset.**—We feel pity; we think of that other poet, away there in the Isle of Wight, who amuses himself by dressing up lost epics. How happy he is amongst his fine books, his friends, his honeysuckles and roses? No matter. De Musset, in this wretched abode of filth and misery, rose higher. From the heights of his doubt and despair, he saw the infinite, as we see the sea from a storm-beaten promontory. Religions, their glory and their decay, the human race, its pangs and its destiny, all that is sublime in the world, appeared there to him in a flash of lightning. He felt, at least this once in his life, the inner tempest of deep sensations, giant-dreams, and intense voluptuousness, the desire of which enabled him to live, the lack of which forced him to die. He was no mere dilettante; he was not content to taste and enjoy; he left his mark on human thought; he told the

world what was man, love, truth, happiness. He suffered, but he imagined; he fainted, but he created. He tore from his entrails with despair the idea which he had conceived, and showed it to the eyes of all, bloody but alive. That is harder and lovelier than to go fondling and gazing upon the ideas of others. There is in the world but one work worthy of a man, the production of a truth, to which we devote ourselves, and in which we believe. The people who have listened to Tennyson are better than our aristocracy of townsfolk and bohemians; but I prefer Alfred de Musset to Tennyson.

—*Taine.*

**Beauty in Tennyson.**—The essential difference of an artist is love of beauty and the power of shaping it. The greatness of an artist is proportionate to the depth and truth of his love of beauty; to his faithfulness to it, and to his unremitting effort to train his natural gift of shaping it into fuller ease, power, and permanence. As to beauty itself, men talk of natural beauty, of physical, moral, and spiritual beauty, and these term-divisions have their use; but at root all beauty is one, and these divided forms of it are modes only of one energy, conditioned by the elements through which it passes. They can all pass into one another, and they can all be expressed in terms of one another.

To define, then, what beauty is in itself is beyond our power, but we can approach a definition of it by marking out clearly its results on us. What is always true of beauty is this, that, wherever it appears, it awakens love of it which has no return on self, but which bears us out of ourselves; it stirs either joy or reverence in the heart without bringing with it any self-admiration or vanity; and it kindles the desire of reproducing not that we may exult in our own skill in forming it, but that our reproduction of it may awaken emotions in others similar to those which the original sight of beauty stirred in our own heart—that is, it more or less forces the seer of it into creation,

This creation, this representation of the beautiful, is art; and the most skilful representation of the ugly—that is, of anything which awakens either repulsion, or base pleasure, or horror which does not set free and purify the soul, or scorn instead of reverence, or which does not kindle in us the desire of reproduction of it that we may stir in others similar emotions to our own—is not art at all. It is clever imitation, it is skill, it is artifice, it is not art. It is characteristic of an age which is writhing under the frivolous despotism of positive science that the accurate and skilful representation of things and facts which are not beautiful is called art; and it belongs to all persons who care for the growth of humanity, not to denounce this error, for denunciation is barren of results, but to live and labour for the opposite truth. Far more rests on that effort than men imagine. A *third at least* of the future betterment of mankind, to which we now look forward with more hope than we have done for years, depends on this effort, on all that it involves, on all that it will create in the imaginative and spiritual life of the human race.

With a few exceptions, into which this tendency to scientific representation carried him—poems of dissection and denunciation, like *Despair*, and worse still, *The Promise of May*, Tennyson was faithful through his whole life to beauty, writing always of what was worthy of love, of joy, of solemn or happy reverence; and by this, and in this sphere, was the steady artist. The manifestation of these things, his creation of them, for the love and pleasure and veneration of himself and men, was his unbroken delight.

—*Stopford Brooke.*

**Tennyson's Commonplaceness.**—At his best Arnold reaches a felicity of style in which Tennyson alone, of all our modern poets, if Tennyson himself, was his superior. The comparison, much as I dislike comparisons, may suggest at least the question why Arnold's popularity is still, as I

think it is, below his deserts. One answer is obvious. I cannot doubt that Arnold fully appreciated the greatest of contemporary artists. But certain references to Tennyson in his essays are significant. Arnold incidentally quotes Tennyson's "great, broad-shouldered, genial Englishman," by way of illustrating his favourite proposition that this broad-shouldered personage was a "barbarian," and conspicuous for insensibility to ideas. He refers with a certain scorn to the self-complacency implied in the phrase about freedom broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent. Though Arnold does not criticise the poetry, he evidently felt—what, to say the truth, I think must be admitted—that Tennyson interpreted the average—shall I say, the Philistine? or the commonplace English sentiment a little too faithfully; but it may be inferred—though Arnold does not draw the inference—that the extraordinary popularity of Tennyson was partly owing to the fact that he could express what occurred to everybody in language that could be approached by nobody. Arnold, on the contrary, is, in all his poems, writing for the cultivated, and even for a small class of cultivated people. The ideas which he expresses are not only such as do not commend themselves, but sometimes such as are rather annoying, to the average reader.

—*Leslie Stephen.*

**Dramatic Power.**—All this he can do with marvellous finish; but he has hardly succeeded, except in "Queen Mary" and his fine picture of Henry II. in "Becket," in drawing a character in all its attitude; and though those poems are quite fine enough to show dramatic power, they are not sufficiently characteristic of his genius to show any wealth of dramatic fancy; and indeed "Harold" must be pronounced a decided failure. Hence his genius can hardly be called dramatic, though in relation to single moods he finds an infinitely more characteristic language for their expression than Mr. Browning,



who would make Tithonus, Ulysses, St. Simeon Stylites, and the Northern Farmers all talk Browningese.

—*R. H. Hutton.*

**Tennyson's Politics.**—Aubrey de Vere asked him whether he were a Conservative. 'I believe in progress,' said Tennyson, 'and I would conserve the hopes of man.' It is the very keynote of his poetry.

—*Waugh.*

**A Conservative.**—But though there are many passages where Tennyson does try to hold an equal balance, and to excuse or even to advocate the impassioned rising of the oppressed in speech or act against their fate, these passages are short, are tentative; he is, as it were, forced into them; and the main line he takes is the line of careful protection of the old against the onset of the new, of steady but very prudent advance through obedience to existing law, of protest against that which he calls "raw haste," of discouraging of indignant speech and act on the part of the people, of distrust, even of contempt, for what seemed to him the mob and for their "lawless din"; and, in consequence of all this, he puts off the regeneration of society to a period so far away that it may be counted by thousands and thousands of years.

—*Stopford Brooke.*

**Tennyson's Method of Describing Nature.**—Tennyson had his own method, and it was different from that of all the others. It differed curiously, and the results to which we are led, when we consider it, are curious.

Mainly speaking, that difference consists in the absence from his mind of any belief or conception of a life in Nature. He described Nature, on the whole, as she was to his senses, as she appeared on the outside. He did it with extraordinary skill, observation, accuracy and magnificence; and we are full of delight with this work of his. I have dwelt on it from poem to poem, and I hope I have succeeded in making clear my full

admiration of its power, beauty, variety and range. But when we have done all this, and think less of particular descriptions, and more of the whole impression made by his work on Nature, we are surprised to find that our interest in Tennyson's poetry of natural description is more intellectual than emotional. We ask why, and the answer is—He did not conceive of Nature as alive. He did not love her as a living Being.

Again, when we read his natural descriptions, we find them drenched with humanity. It is impossible, save very rarely, to get away in them from the sorrows, or the joys of man. But when we do not meet with humanity in his landscape, the landscape by itself is cold. It rarely has any sentiment of its own. The sentiment in it is imposed upon it by the human soul; so that, at last, we are driven to say: "On the whole, this poet did not care much to be alone with Nature, and did not love her dearly for her own sake. And this is strange; it is unlike any other great poet of this century."

—Stopford Brooke.

**Theodore Watts's Division of Nature Poets.**—First, poets who, whether from original impulse or from the influence of the artistic methods of their time, treat Nature simply as the background of the human story.

Secondly, poets upon whom Nature produces a kind of ecstasy that may be called Sufeyistic, an ecstasy resulting in a rapturous hymn to her glory, rather than in a vivid picture of her features.

And, thirdly, poets whose impulse is simply to paint the features of Nature in every detail of their beauty, using the human story merely as an artistic *raison d'être* for an objective representation of Nature, or at least a representation as objective as the medium at the command of an artist whose material is words will allow.

Theodore Watts believes Tennyson to belong to the first

class, though not specially; not at all to the second, and distinctly to the third.

**The Unobtrusive Morality which underlies all Tennyson's Works.**—No one can criticise "In Memoriam" and "The Idylls of the King," still less pass from the one to the other, *without being conscious of the immense influence which ethical principles have had in moulding Tennyson's work as an artist*, or without reflecting in some form on the charge so commonly made or implied against him, that he has injured the character of his art for the sake of the perfectly irrelevant interests of morality.

If you are to delineate man at all, you must delineate him with his human nature, and therefore you can never really omit from any worthy picture that conscience which is its crown. I believe, myself, that Tennyson is never guilty of letting his moral purpose crop out ostentatiously so as to injure his art; indeed I have never seen it even alleged that he is so guilty, except in relation to his picture of Arthur, of which I have presently to speak. And as I believe that his intense conviction, that Knowledge is "the second, not the first," is true—that Art herself must walk by the light of Love and Faith, and must not paint human nature in the monstrous and conscienceless shapes it sometimes really assumes, unless with some foil which shall make the void where the moral life should be, painfully visible,—I cannot think that in any respect Lord Tennyson has shown himself a higher artist than in the important but generally unostentatious place which the conscience takes in his greater poems.

—R. H. Hutton.

**Tennyson's Christianity.**—Love, not duty, is the first thing with Jesus; the teaching of loving, not the teaching of morality. If love be secured, morality is secured. If a man love God, that is, if he love the living source of love, righteousness, justice and truth, he is absolutely certain to secure noble conduct. Morality then is not neglected, it is

taken in the stride of love. And that is the root of Jesus. Love fulfils the law; and all the poets, and every artist (whether nominally a Christian or not), take a similar position.

This is the Christian position, and it is the position Tennyson preserves all through his poetry. There is no one it is true from whose work better lessons can be drawn for the conduct of life, for morals in their higher ranges, than can be drawn from Tennyson. But below all conduct, as its foundation impulse, lies in this poet's work the love of the infinite Love, the passion of unending effort for it, and the conviction of an eternity of life in which to pursue after it. This eternal continuance in us of the conscious life of love; in other words, of incessant action towards greater nearness to the illimitable Love which is God, is the position of Christ; and it is the position of one who believes in a personal immortality.

This was Tennyson's position. It might be proved up to the hilt from his poetry, and it makes him clearly Christian.

—*Stopford Brooke.*

**Tennyson's Creed.**—"Many years ago, I had a conversation with the Poet in his attic study at Farringford, that lasted till nearly day-break. He discoursed on many subjects, and when we touched on religion, he said, *I am not very fond of creeds: it is enough for me that I know God Himself came down from heaven in the form of a man.* I cannot resist testifying to the singular frankness and impressiveness of his conversation, especially when talking to my wife, who approached much nearer to his intellectual level than I did, and whom he has now joined "on the mystic deeps."

—*Rev. Doctor Gatty.*

**The Distinguishing Mark of Tennyson.**—How, in a few words, shall we assemble all the features of so manifold a talent? Tennyson is a born poet, that is, a builder of airy places and imaginary castles. But the individual passion and absorbing

preoccupations which generally guide the hands of such men are wanting to him; he found in himself no plan of a new edifice; he has built after all the rest; he has simply chosen amongst all forms the most elegant, ornate, exquisite. Of their beauties he has taken but the flower. At most, now and then, he has amused himself by designing some genuinely English and modern cottage. If in this choice of architecture, adopted or restored, we look for a trace of him, we shall find it, here and there, in some more finely sculptured frieze, in some more delicate and graceful sculptured rose-work; but we only find it marked and sensible in the purity and elevation of the moral emotion which we carry away with us when we quit his gallery of art.

**Personal Appearance.**—One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusky-dark hair; bright, laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face—most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musically metallic—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous: I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to.

—*Carlyle.*

Tennyson is a grand specimen of a man, with a magnificent head set on his shoulders like the capital of a mighty pillar. His hair is long and wavy and covers a massive head. He wears a beard and mustache, which one begrudges as hiding so much of that firm, powerful, but finely-chiselled mouth. His eyes are large and gray, and open wide when a subject interests him; they are well shaded by the noble brow, with its strong lines of thought and suffering. I can quite understand Samuel Laurence calling it the best balance of head he had ever seen. He is very brown after all the pedestrianizing along our south coast,

—*Caroline Fox.*



## CHAPTER V.

### SIGHT-WORK AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING.

**The Prioress' Tale.**—(Sight-work for students of the *Prologue*).

There was in Asie, in a gret citee,  
Amonges cristen folk a Iewerye,  
Sustened by a lord of that contree  
For foule vsure and lucre of vilanye  
Hateful to Crist and to his companye ;  
And thurgh the strete men myght ryde or wende,  
For it was free, and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood  
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were  
Children an heep, ycomen of Cristen blood,  
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere  
Swich maner doctrine as men vsed there,  
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,  
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone,  
A little clergeon, seuen yeer of age,  
That day by day to scole was his wone,  
And eek also, wher as he sey thimage  
Of Cristes mooder, hadde he in vsage,  
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye  
His *Aue Marie* as he goeth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught  
Our blisful lady, Cristes mooder dere,  
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,  
For sely child wol alday sone lere ;  
But ay, when I remembere on this matere,  
Seint Nicholas stant euer in my presence,  
For he so yong to Crist did reuerence.

This litel child his litel book lerninge,  
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,  
 He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,  
 As children lerned hir antiploner;  
 And, as he dorste, he drough hym ner and ner,  
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,  
 Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this latin was to seye,  
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;  
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye  
 Texpounden him this song in his langage,  
 Or telle him why this song was in vsage;  
 This preyde he him to construe and declare  
 Ful ofte tyme vpon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,  
 Answerde him thus: 'this song, I haue herd seye,  
 Was maked of our blisful lady free,  
 Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye  
 To been our help and socour when we deye.  
 I can no more expounde in this matere;  
 I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reuerence  
 Of Cristes mooder?' seyde this Innocent;  
 'Now certes, I wol do my diligence  
 To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;  
 Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,  
 And shal be beten thryës in an houre,  
 I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward priuely,  
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,  
 And than he song it wel and boldely  
 Fro word to word, acording with the note;  
 Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,  
 To scoleward and homward whan he wente;  
 On Cristes mooder set was his entente.



As I haue seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye  
 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,  
 Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye  
*O Alma redemptoris euer-mo.*  
 The swetnes hath his herte perced so  
 Of Cristes mooder, that, to hir to preye,  
 He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,  
 That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,  
 Vp swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple, allas !  
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest,  
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest  
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,  
 Which is agayn your lawes reuerence ?'

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred  
 This innocent out of this world to chace ;  
 An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,  
 That in an aley hadde a priuee place ;  
 And as the child gan forby for to pace,  
 This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him faste,  
 And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

. . . . .  
 This poure widwe awaiteth al that nyght  
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght ;  
 For which, as sone as it was dayes lyght,  
 With face pale of drede and bisy thocht,  
 She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght,  
 Til finally she gan so fer espye  
 That he last seyn was in the Iewerye.

With moodres pitee in hir brest enclosed,  
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir mynde,  
 To euery place wher she hath supposed  
 By lyklibede hir litel child to fynde ;  
 And euer on Cristes mooder meke and kynde  
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroughte,  
 Among the cursed Iewes she him soughte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously  
 To enery Iew that dwelte in thilke place,  
 To telle hir, if hir child wente ought forby.  
 They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,  
 Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space  
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde,  
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude  
 By mouth of Innocentz, lo heer thy myght!  
 This gemme of chastitee, this Emeraude,  
 And eek of martirdom the Ruby bryght,  
 Ther he with throte ykoruen lay vpryght,  
 He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe  
 So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,  
 In coomen, for to wondre vp-on this thing,  
 And hastily they for the Prouost sente;  
 He cam anon with-uten taryng,  
 And herieth Crist that is of heuen king,  
 And eek his mooder, honour of mankynde,  
 And after that, the Iewes leet he bynde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun  
 Vp-taken was, singing his song alway;  
 And with honour of gret processiou  
 They carien him vn-to the nexte abbay.  
 His mooder swowning by the bere lay;  
 Vnnethe myght the peple that was there  
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon  
 This Prouost dooth the Iewes for to sterue  
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;  
 He nolde no swich cursednes obserue.  
 Euel shal haue, that euel wol deserue.  
 Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,  
 And after that he heng hem by the lawe,

Vp-on his bere ay lyth this innocent  
 Biforn the chief auter, whil masse laste,  
 And after that, the abbot with his couent  
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;  
 And whan they holy water on him caste,  
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynð was holy water,  
 And song—*‘O Alma redemptoris mater!’*

This abbot, which that was an holy man  
 As monkes been, or elles oughten be,  
 This yonge child to coniure he bigan,  
 And seyde, ‘o dere child, I halse thee,  
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,  
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,  
 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?’

‘My throte is cut vn-to my nekke-boon,’  
 Seyde this child, ‘and, as by wey of kynde,  
 I sholde haue deyed, ye, long tyme agoon,  
 But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes fynde,  
 Wil that his glorie laste and be in mynde,  
 And, for the worship of his mooder dere,  
 Yet may I singe “*O Alma*” loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes mooder swete,  
 I louede alwey, as after my conninge;  
 And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,  
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe  
 This antem verrailly in my deyinge,  
 As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,  
 Me thoughte she leyde a greyn vp-on my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I mot certeyn  
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,  
 Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn,  
 And afterward thus seyde she to me,  
 “My litel child, now wol I fecche thee  
 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;  
 Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.”’

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,  
 His tonge out caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,  
 And he yaf vp the goost ful softly.  
 And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,  
 His salte teres trikkled down as reyn,  
 And gruf he fil al plat vp-on the grounde,  
 And stille he lay as he had ben ybounde.

The couent eek lay on the pauement  
 Weping, and herien Cristes mooder dere,  
 And after that they rise, and forth ben went,  
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,  
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere  
 Enclosen they his litel body swete;  
 Ther he is now, god leue us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, sleyn also  
 With cursed Iewes, as it is notable,  
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago;  
 Prey eek for vs, we sinful folk vnstable,  
 That of his mercy god so merciablen  
 On vs his grete mercy multiplye,  
 For reuerence of his mooder Marye. *Amen.*

### Sonnets from Shakespeare.

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possessed,  
 Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least;  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
 Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy ;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride,  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace ;  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow ;  
But out, alack ! he was but one hour mine,  
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove ;  
O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

---

### Song for Saint Cecilia's Day.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
This universal frame began.  
When Nature underneath a heap  
Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head,  
The tuneful voice was heard from high :  
" Arise, ye more than dead ! "

Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry  
In order to their stations leap,  
    And Music's power obey.  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
    This universal frame began :  
    From harmony to harmony  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in Man.  
What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?  
    When Jubal struck the chorded shell  
    His listening brethren stood around,  
    And, wondering, on their faces fell  
    To worship that celestial sound.  
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell  
    Within the hollow of that shell  
    That spoke so sweetly and so well,  
What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?

    The trumpet's loud clangour  
    Excites us to arms,  
With shrill notes of anger  
    And mortal alarms.  
The double double double beat  
    Of the thundering drum  
Cries. " Hark ! the foes come ;  
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat ! "

    The soft complaining flute  
    In dying notes discovers  
    The woes of hopeless lovers,  
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

    Sharp violins proclaim  
Their jealous pangs and desperation,  
Fury, frantic indignation,  
Depth of pains, and height of passion  
    For the fair disdainful dame.

But O. what art can teach  
What human voice can reach  
    The sacred organ's praise.

Notes inspiring holy love,  
Notes that wing their heavenly ways  
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,  
And trees uprooted left their place  
Sequacious of the lyre ;  
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher ;  
When to her organ vocal breath was given  
An angel heard, and straight appeared—  
Mistaking Earth for Heaven !

As from the power of sacred lays  
The spheres began to move,  
And sung the great Creator's praise  
To all the blest above ;  
So, when the last and dreadful hour  
This trembling pageant shall devour,  
The Trumpet shall be heard on high.  
The dead shall live, the living die,  
And Music shall untune the sky.

---

### The Progress of Poesy.

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings !  
From Helicon's harmonious springs  
A thousand rills their mazy progress take :  
The laughing flowers that round them blow  
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.  
Now the rich stream of music flows along,  
Deep, majestic, smooth and strong.  
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign.  
Now rolling down the steep amain  
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour ;  
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

O Sovereign of the willing soul,  
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
Enchanting shell ! the sullen Cares  
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.

On Thracia's hills the Lord of war  
 Has curbed the fury of his car  
 And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.  
 Perching on the sceptred hand  
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king  
 With ruffled plumes and flagging wing.  
 Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie  
 The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

Thou the voice, the dance, obey,  
 Tempered to thy warbled lay,  
 O'er Idalia's velvet-green  
 The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen  
 On Cytherea's day,  
 With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,  
 Frisking light in frolic measures ;  
 Now pursuing, now retreating,  
 Now in circling troops they meet  
 To brisk notes in cadence beating,  
 Glance their many-twinkling feet.  
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare :  
 Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay,  
 With arms sublime that float upon the air,  
 In gliding state she wins her easy way :  
 O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move  
 The bloom of young desire and purple light of love.

Man's feeble race what ills await !  
 Labour and Penury, the racks of Pain,  
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,  
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate !  
 The fond complaint, my song, disprove,  
 And justify the laws of Jove.  
 Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse ?  
 Night and all her sickly dews,  
 Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,  
 He gives to range the dreary sky,  
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar  
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of war.

In climes beyond the solar road  
 Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,



The Muse has broke the twilight gloom,  
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.  
And oft, beneath the odorous shade  
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,  
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat  
In loose numbers wildly sweet,  
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.  
Her track, where'er the goddess roves.  
Glory pursue and generous shame,  
The unconquerable mind, and freedom's holy flame.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
Isles, that crown the Ægean deep,  
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,  
Or where Meander's amber waves  
In lingering labyrinths creep,  
How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
Mute, but to the voice of anguish !  
Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathed around ;  
Every shade and hallowed fountain  
Murmured deep a solemn sound :  
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,  
Left the Parnassus for the Latian plains,  
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.  
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
They sought, O Albion ! next thy sea-encircled coast.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,  
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,  
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,  
To him the mighty Mother did unveil  
Her awful face : the dauntless Child  
Stretched forth his little arms and smiled.  
"This pencil take," she said, "whose colours clear  
Richly paint the vernal year :  
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy !  
This can unlock the gates of joy !  
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,  
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears !"

Nor second he, that rode sublime  
 Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,  
 The secrets of the abyss to spy.  
 He passed the flaming bounds of place and time :  
 The living throne, the sapphire blaze,  
 Where angels tremble while they gaze,  
 He saw ; but, blasted with excess of light  
 Closed bis eyes in endless night.  
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car  
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear  
 Two coursers of ethereal race,  
 With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore !  
 Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,  
 Scatters from her pictured urn  
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.  
 But ah ! 'tis heard no more—  
 O lyre divine, what daring spirit  
 Wakes thee now ? Though he inherit  
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
 That the Theban eagle bear,  
 Sailing with supreme dominion  
 Through the azure deep of air,  
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
 Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,  
 With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun ;  
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

---

### Sonnets from Wordsworth.

The world is too much with us ; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ;  
 Little we see in Nature that is ours ;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !  
 This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;  
It moves us not :—Great God ! I'd rather be  
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour :  
England hath need of thee ; she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters ; altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men :  
O raise us up ! return to us again ;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart ;  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea ;  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

It is not to be thought of that the flood  
Of British freedom, which to the open sea  
Of the world's praise from dark antiquity  
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"  
Roused though it be full often to a mood  
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,  
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands  
Should perish ; and to evil and to good  
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung  
Armoury of the invincible knights of old :  
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakspeare spake ; the faith and morals hold  
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung  
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

**Self-Dependence.**

Weary of myself, and sick of asking  
What I am, and what I ought to be,  
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me  
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire  
O'er the sea and to the stars I send ;  
"Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,  
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end !

Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,  
On my heart your mighty charm renew ;  
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
Feel my soul becoming vast like you !

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,  
In the rustling night-air came the answer,—  
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,  
Undistracted by the sights they see,  
These demand not that the things without them  
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll ;  
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
In what state God's other works may be,  
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice ! long since, severely clear,  
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear,—  
"Resolve to be thyself ; and know, that he  
Who finds himself loses his misery !"

**Prayer of Columbus.**

A battered, wrecked old man,  
 Thrown on this savage shore, far, far from home,  
 Pent by the sea and dark rebellious brows, twelve dreary months,  
 Sore, stiff with many toils, sickened and nigh to death,  
 I take my way along the island's edge,  
 Venting a heavy heart.

I am too full of woe !  
 Haply I may not live another day :  
 I cannot rest, O God, I cannot eat or drink or sleep,  
 Till I put forth myself, my prayer, once more to Thee,  
 Breathe, bathe myself once more in Thee, commune with Thee,  
 Report myself once more to Thee.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*                      \*

All my emprises have been filled with Thee,  
 My speculations, plans, begun and carried on in thoughts  
 of Thee,  
 Sailing the deep or journeying the land for Thee :  
 Intentions, purports, aspirations mine, leaving results to Thee.

O I am sure they really came from Thee,  
 The urge, the ardour, the unconquerable will,  
 The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,  
 A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in sleep :  
 These sped me on.

By me and these the work so far accomplished,  
 By me earth's elder cloyed and stifled lands uncloyed, unloosed,  
 By me the hemispheres rounded and tied, the unknown to the  
 known.

The end I know not, it is all in Thee :  
 Or small or great I know not—what broad fields, what lands.  
 Haply the brutish measureless human undergrowth I know  
 Transplanted there may rise to stature, knowledge worthy Thee ;  
 Haply the swords I know may there indeed be turned to  
 reaping-tools ;  
 Haply the lifeless cross I know, Europe's dead cross, may bud  
 and blossom there.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand.  
That Thou, O God, my life hast lighted  
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,  
Light rare, untellable, lighting the very light,  
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages :  
For that, O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees,  
Old, poor, and paralysed, I thank Thee.

My terminus near,  
The clouds already closing in upon me,  
The voyage balked, the course disputed, lost,  
I yield my ships to Thee.

My hands, my limbs, grow nerveless,  
My brain feels racked, bewildered.  
Let the old timbers part, I will not part :  
I will cling fast to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me :  
Thee, Thee, at least I know.

Is it the prophet's thought I speak, or am I raving ?  
What do I know of life ? what of myself ?  
I know not even my own work past or present :  
Dim, ever-shifting guesses of it spread before me,  
Of newer better worlds, their mighty parturition,  
Mocking, perplexing me.

And these things I see suddenly, what mean they ?  
As if some miracle, some hand divine unsealed my eyes,  
Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,  
And on the distant waves sail countless ships,  
And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

---

### An Incident in a Railroad Car.

He spoke of Burns : men rude and rough  
Pressed round to hear the praise of one  
Whose heart was made of manly, simple stuff,  
As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned,  
Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,  
His brook-like songs whom glory never weaned  
From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,  
Sun-like, o'er faces brown and hard,  
As if in him who read they felt and saw  
Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong  
And slavish tyranny to see,  
A sight to make our faith more pure and strong  
In high humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence  
Promptings their former life above,  
And something of a finer reverence  
For beauty, truth, and love.

God scatters love on every side  
Freely among his children all,  
And always hearts are lying open wide,  
Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds  
Of a more true and open life,  
Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled deeds,  
With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours  
Some wild germs of a higher birth,  
Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers  
Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie  
These promises of wider bliss,  
Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,  
In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestic  
In life or death, since time began,  
Is native in the simple heart of all,  
The angel heart of man.

And thus, among the untaught poor,  
Great deeds and feelings find a home,  
That cast in shadow all the golden lore  
Of classic Greece and Rome.

O, mighty brother-soul of man,  
Where'er thou art, in low or high,  
Thy skyey arches with exulting span  
O'er-roof infinity !

All thoughts that mould the age begin  
Deep down within the primitive soul,  
And from the many slowly upward win  
To one who grasps the whole :

In his wide brain the feeling deep  
That struggled on the many's tongue  
Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges leap  
O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling,—wide  
In the great mass its base is hid,  
And, narrowing up to thought, stands glorified,  
A moveless pyramid.

Nor is he far astray, who deems  
That every hope, which rises and grows broad  
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams  
From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes : in common souls  
Hope is but vague and undefined,  
Till from the poet's tongue the message rolls  
A blessing to his kind,



Never did Poesy appear  
So full of heaven to me, as when  
I saw how it would pierce through pride and fear  
To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three  
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight  
Once in a century ;—

But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
And friendless sons of men ;

To write some earnest verse or line  
Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine  
In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
May be forgotten in his day,  
But surely shall be crowned at last with those  
Who live and speak for aye.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### DISCRIMINATION.

- I. Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep :  
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,  
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep  
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground ;  
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of Love  
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,  
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove  
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.  
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fir'd,  
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast ;  
I, sick withal, the help of bath desir'd,  
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,  
But found no cure: the bath for my help lies  
Where Cupid got new fire—my mistress' eyes.

The little Love-god lying once asleep  
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,  
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep  
Came tripping by ; but in her maiden hand  
The fairest votary took up that fire  
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd,  
And so the general of hot desire  
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarm'd.  
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,  
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,  
Growing a bath and healthful remedy  
For men diseas'd ; but I, my mistress' thrall,  
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,  
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

Make a comparison of these two treatments of the same theme, with a view of ascertaining their relative merits. Which was written first ? \*

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### SONG,

BY A PERSON OF QUALITY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1733.

- II. Fluttering spread the purple pinions,  
Gentle Cupid, o'er my heart,  
I a slave in thy dominions ;  
Nature must give way to art.

Mild *Arcadians*, ever blooming,  
 Nightly nodding o'er your flocks,  
 See my weary days consuming,  
 All beneath yon flowery rocks.

Thus the *Cyprian* goddess weeping,  
 Mourn'd *Adonis*, darling youth :  
 Him the boar, in silence creeping,  
 Gored with unrelenting tooth.

*Cynthia*, tune harmonious numbers ;  
 Fair *Discretion*, string the lyre ;  
 Soothe my ever-waking slumbers ;  
 Bright *Apollo*, lend thy choir.

Gloomy *Pluto*, king of terrors,  
 Arm'd in adamantine chains,  
 Lead me to the crystal mirrors,  
 Watering soft Elysian plains.

Mournful cypress, verdant willow,  
 Gilding my *Aurelia's* brows,  
*Morpheus* hovering o'er my pillow,  
 Hear me pay my dying vows.

Melancholy smooth *Meander*,  
 Swiftly purling in a round,  
 On thy margin lovers wander,  
 With thy flowery chaplets crown'd.

Thus when *Philomela*, drooping,  
 Softly seeks her silent mate,  
 See the bird of *Juno* stooping ;  
 Melody resigns to fate.

Write a short description of this poem for the purpose of conveying to one who has never read it, an idea of its theme and style.

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III. If it were necessary to select one of the following for publication on the ground of poetical merit, which would you choose? Give reasons.

- a. Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
 And the mountain-tops that freeze,  
 Bow themselves when he did sing :  
 To his music plants and flowers  
 Ever sprung, as sun and showers  
 There had made a lasting Spring.

Every thing that heard him play,  
 Even the billows of the sea,  
     Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
 In sweet music is such art,  
 Killing care and grief of heart  
     Fall asleep, or hearing die.

---

- b. Affection's charm no longer gilds  
     The idol of the shrine;  
 But cold Oblivion seeks to fill  
     Regret's ambrosial wine.  
 Though Friendship's offering buried lies  
     'Neath cold Aversion's snow,  
 Regard and Faith will ever bloom  
     Perpetually below.

I see thee whirl in marble halls,  
     In Pleasure's giddy train;  
 Remorse is never on that brow,  
     Nor Sorrow's mark of pain.  
 Deceit has marked thee for her own;  
     Inconstancy the same;  
 And Ruin wildly sheds its gleam  
     Athwart thy path of shame.

---

- c. Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing !

Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing :  
 Low, my lute ; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—  
     Low, lute, low !

Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken ;  
 Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken ;  
 Low, my lute ! oh low, my lute ! we fade and are forsaken—  
     Low, dear lute, low !

---

*Es fällt ein Stern herunter.*

- d. See yonder, where a gem of night  
     Falls helpless from its heavenly height !  
 It is the brilliant star of Love  
     That thus forsakes the realms above.

And one by one the wind bereaves  
 The apple-tree of silvery leaves ;  
 The breezes in their reckless play,  
 Spurn them with dancing feet away.

And round and round swims on the pool  
 The tuneful swan so beautiful,  
 And ever singing sweet and slow  
 He sinks into his grave below.

It is so dreary and so dread !  
 The leaf is wholly witherèd,  
 The fallen star has flamed away,  
 The swan has sung his dying lay.

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- c.* How happy to defend the heart,  
 When Love has never thrown a heart !  
 But ah ! unhappy when it bends,  
 If pleasure her soft bliss suspends !  
 Sweet in a wild disordered strain,  
 A lost and wandering heart to gain !  
 Oft in mistaken language wooed  
 The skilful lover's understood.

IV. What phases and conceptions of poetry are illustrated by the following ?

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- a.* Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
 So do our minutes hasten to their end ;  
 Each changing place with that which goes before,  
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.  
 Nativity, once in the main of light,  
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,  
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.  
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth  
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,  
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,  
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow ;  
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,  
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.
- 

- b.* Jenny kiss'd me when we met  
 Jumping from the chair she sat in ;  
 Time, you thief ! who love to get  
 Sweets into your list, put that in.  
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad ;  
 Say that health and wealth have missed me ;  
 Say I'm growing old, but add—  
 Jenny kissed me !

Write a short "appreciation" of each of the following sonnets on *The Nile* and sum up their merits in a discriminating comparison.

1. It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,  
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,  
All times and things, as in that vision, seem  
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—  
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands  
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme  
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,  
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.

Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,  
As of a world left empty of its throng,  
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,  
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along  
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take  
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

2. Month after month the gathering rains descend,  
Drenching yon secret Ethiopian dells,  
And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles  
Where frost and heat in strange embraces blend  
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.  
Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells  
By Nile's aerial urn; with rapid spells  
Trying those waters to their mighty end.

O'er Egypt's land of memory floods are level  
And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest  
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil  
And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.  
Beware, O man—for knowledge must to thee  
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

3. Son of the old moon mountains African!  
Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile!  
We call thee fruitful and that very while  
A desert fills our seeing's inward span:  
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,  
Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile  
Those men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,  
Rest them a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan.

O may dark fancies err? They surely do:  
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste  
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew  
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste  
The pleasant sunrise. Green isles hast thou too,  
And to the sea as happily dost haste.





# NOTES ON TENNYSON.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

Tennyson had just emerged from boyhood when he wrote this poem ; it illustrates a pensive tendency to dwell upon his earlier experiences which appears in every volume he has given us. He had read the *Thousand and One Tales* in early childhood, and at twenty the pleasure he had felt in dreamily brooding over those charming Oriental stories seemed a fit subject for poetic expression. What form should the poem take ? Of course this expression of his own emotions must be a lyric ; but of what construction ? Not a sonnet ; because that form is compact and thoughtful, and this poem must be indolent and dreamy. Not a string of quatrains ; because quatrains are not indolent, and do not lend themselves to dreamy description. Long lines would be too solemn, short lines too rapid ; it must be tetrameters, not rapid trochees but short iambics fully vocalized and softly liquid. And the stanzas must be rather long, like the descriptive passages in *The Lady of the Lake*, about the length, say, of a Spenserian stanza. Edgar Poe thinks this kind of lyric should be a hundred lines long, but as this is to be in short lines, and as it is not to make much demand upon our feelings, it may run to a hundred and fifty, or thereabouts.

The poem consists of fourteen stanzas of eleven lines each, The stanza consists of ten iambic tetrameters, followed by an iambic trimeter, the last foot irregular—an amphirach. The last three lines of each stanza have somewhat the effect of a refrain. The most remarkable feature of the versification is the arrangement of the rhymes of the first eight lines of each stanza ; in the fourteen stanzas there are thirteen different arrangements of rhyming words : the effect of this is odd and pleasing ; though the rhymes never come when expected, yet

they inevitably come, and we are struck by a vague notion of whimsical and fantastic caprice. Probably no one but Tennyson could have selected so happy a medium of expression for his childhood impressions of that strange and pleasing book as this particular form of lyric. It is artfully artless.

There are certain devices of sound made use of in this early work which the poet used all his life. When he wishes to denote haste, or multitude, or restless motion, or enthusiasm, he is fond of using an extra unaccented syllable, as if to hint that the reader must read a little faster if he would finish the line in the usual time. These extra syllables are not to be apologized for as flaws, nor merely elided, they are there for a purpose, and should be sounded rapidly. The following lines are illustrations:

"And many a sheeny summer-morn."  
 "From the green rivage many a fall  
 Of diamond rillets musical."  
 "Above thro' many a bowery turn."  
 "A realm of pleasance, many a mound  
 And many a shadow-chequered lawn."  
 "Of night new-risen that marvellous time."

When he describes any phenomena with which sounds are connected he will choose the words so as to imitate those sounds. The poem abounds in illustrations. The first four lines are in harmony with what they describe; so are the first two lines of the second stanza; so are several lines in the fifth stanza; the words of the seventh stanza from "the darkness of the world" to "withholding time" are like strong clear notes of a bird's song. In the tenth stanza there is a suggestion of silence in

"Many a shadow-chequered lawn  
 Full of the city's stilly sound;"

one fancies the poet's finger is on his lips, and he lisps as one does to request silence.

Again, when he uses alliteration it is rarely from mere love of alliteration, but usually for some ulterior purpose. "Leaping lightly" suggests the springing of youthful footsteps, "down-

*drooped in many a floating fold*" suggests the different waves in the "cloth of gold." There are many other examples.

Finally, the poet is fond of using a trochee or a spondee at the beginning of an iambic line to denote some change of thought or emotion; usually it is for the sake of calling unusual attention to the idea, in this way it denotes enthusiasm, energy, wonder, child-like astonishment and delight: and in this poem it is a beautiful and appropriate device. For example, observe the following lines:

"*Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim.*"  
 "*Black the garden bowers and grotts slumbered.*"  
 "*Full of the city's stilly sound.*"  
 "*Right to the cavern cedarn doors.*"  
 "*Hundreds of crescents on the roof.*"  
 "*Amorous, and lashes like to rays.*"

And for the finest illustration observe how this device echoes the rapturous wonder of the child in the first four lines of the last stanza.

The knowledge of sound-effects displayed by Tennyson in 1830 (possibly earlier) impresses us as simply amazing, even when we consider the models he studied. In his later works the same wonderful harmony between sense and sound which is here so marked in words and lines, and even stanzas, comes to pervade whole passages, whole poems, indeed. An able critic points out the following instance of the poet's splendid harmony:

"Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
 The bare, black cliff clang'd round him as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels."

"We hear all the changes on the vowel *a*—every sound of it used to give the impression—and then, in a moment, the verse runs into breadth, smoothness, and vastness: for *Bedivere* comes to the shore and sees the great water:

"And on a sudden, lo! the level lake  
 And the long glories of the winter's moon,"

in which the vowel *o* in its changes is used as the vowel *a* has been used before."

It is through perceiving hundreds, yes, thousands, of examples of such conscientious and beautiful work that one comes to appreciate the powers of Tennyson as a master of language.

So far we have spoken of the suitability of the form and sound-effects to the theme; but this particular phase of harmony is only one.

There is a harmony in the choice of words or, to speak with more discrimination, there is a harmony in the choice of picturesque conceptions (the words are well-chosen because they do justice to the poet's imagination) which must be felt if it is to be appreciated, for it cannot be expressed in prosaic criticism. What does the child's mind do or experience when it reads the *Arabian Nights* for the first time? Some doubtless will remember the unspeakable pleasure of reading simple romantic tales in very early years. The child's mind wanders without a dissenting thought of doubt, or analytic side-glance, from one enchanting picture to another, endorsing the wildest fancies, revelling in luxurious exaggerations, lulled by a sensuous dream. What has the poet given us to correspond with this celestial glamour? Why he has caught the glamour in a mirror; he has given us a succession of the most romantic pictures, dim, suggestive, secret, sensuous, simple, splendid, childlike, one stretch of the scene after another.

This harmony of imaginative conception is the noblest grace of literature, and seems to act nearly always as a guiding star in the choice of words and even of poetic forms.

Any moralizing would be in bad taste here. Yet the piece is thoroughly moral and vastly more restorative and sustaining than platitudes such as we find in many obtrusively moral works. If any one had the desire to pass through the lovely coloring and soft roundness of this work to the framework which gives it strength and solidity, he would find that that

framework consists of sound, moral and rational propositions. That it is wise to recall the innocent days and ways of childhood, that imaginative pleasures are the most harmless, helpful and enduring, that such pleasures are best appreciated by those who are led to read the best standard works in childhood, these are the body of a work which we prefer not to dissect, but to regard with the lazy satisfaction of a child.

Though the poem is called *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* it is based upon only one of the tales, the story of *Noor ad Deen and the Fair Persian*; It is one of the most pleasing, humorous and skilfully contrived of the collection.

The King of Bussorah, a tributary of the Caliph Haroun al Raschid, has two viziers or ministers, one a paragon, the other a villain. The former buys for the king a female slave, known as the Fair Persian, a miracle of beauty, wit, learning, gayety, and goodness. But before the king sees her, Noor ad Deen, the good vizier's son, becomes her lover. The father is enraged but eventually pardons his son and commands him to regard the slave as his wife. The good vizier dies leaving Noor ad Deen wealthy. The son is a terrible spendthrift, and in a year is in want. He sells his other slaves. He has to sell the Fair Persian. He offers her on the market. The bad vizier bids. Noor ad Deen would rather die than let him have her. They have to leave Bussorah on account of the anger of their enemy. They go by the Euphrates to Bagdad. They fall asleep at the gate of the Caliph's gardens near the Tigris. The Caliph's steward takes them in, shows them the lovely gardens by moonlight, then the pavilion. They made merry in the great hall. The girl and Noor ad Deen overcome the gravity of the old Ibrahim, and all three become boisterous. They light up the whole pavilion. The Caliph sees the blaze from his palace. With his vizier and the famous Mesrour he visits the pavilion secretly. He enters, disguised as a fisherman, and is charmed with Noor ad Deen and the accomplished girl. He learns their

story, pardons the folly of Ibrahim, and takes the affair in good part. He offers to make Noor ad Deen King of Bussorah, but that light hearted youth prefers to be a favourite at Bagdad. The bad vizier is executed, the King of Bussorah is lectured : Noor ad Deen and the Persian girl are enriched and live at Bagdad with all the happiness in the world.

Some of the passages of this story have a great interest for admirers of this poem, because they furnish the ground work of its descriptions; but the imagination of Tennyson has amplified these suggestions in a wonderful and delightful manner. Some of the most interesting lines may be quoted here.

“In Bagdad you will never feel the extremity of cold in winter, nor the excess of heat in summer, but enjoy an eternal spring with all its flowers, and the delicious fruits of autumn.”

“They rambled a considerable time along the gardens that bordered on the Tigris. Keeping close to one of these that was enclosed with a very long wall, they turned at the end of it, into a well-paved street, near to which they perceived a magnificent gateway and a fountain.”

“The garden belonged to the Caliph, and in the middle of it there was a pavilion, called the Pavilion of Pictures, because its chief ornaments were pictures after the Persian manner, drawn by the most celebrated painters in Persia, whom the Caliph had sent for on purpose. The stately hall within this pavilion was lighted by fourscore arches with a chandler in each; but these were lighted only when the Caliph came thither to spend the evening. On such occasions they made a glorious illumination, and could be seen at a great distance throughout the countryside, and by a great part of the city.”

“Ibrahim led them to a spot whence, at one view, they might see the disposition, grandeur and beauty of the whole. Noor ad Deen had seen very fine gardens, but never any comparable to this.”

"At last they came to the Pavilion of Pictures. They stood awhile to admire its wonderful structure, size, and loftiness; and after taking a full view of it on every side, went up many steps of fine white marble to the hall door, which they found locked."

"Noor ad Deen and the Fair Persian entered the hall, and were never tired with admiring the beauty and richness of the place. The sofas were very noble and costly; and besides the chandelier suspended from every arch, there was between each two a silver branch supporting a wax candle."

"When supper was finished, Noor ad Deen opened a lattice, and calling the Fair Persian to him, 'come thither,' said he, 'and with me admire the charming prospect and beauty of the garden by moonlight; nothing can be more agreeable.'"

"The neighborhood of the Tigris had given the Caliph opportunity of turning the stream under a stately bridge into his garden through a piece of water, in which the choicest fish of the river used to swim."

"The slaves quickly pulled off his fisherman's clothes and put on him the rich costume they had brought."

"Ibrahim saw the Caliph on the throne that was in the hall."

"'Fair Persian' said the Caliph, 'I have sent Noor ad Deen to Bussorah as king, and when I have given him the despatches necessary for his establishment, you shall go thither and be queen.'"

"This discourse encouraged the Fair Persian, and comforted her very sensibly."

It would seem that the moment chosen by Tennyson for the brilliant pictures which complete this climax of wonders is that in which the king is laughing at Ibrahim and consoling the Persian girl in a manner oddly similar to that in which his renowned successor in romance, Fitz-James, consoles Ellen.

1. "The breeze of a joyful dawn": the spirits of a bright, vigorous childhood.
2. "Silken sail of infancy": the sibilants suggest the rustling of silk.
3. 4. "The tide .... time": my mind dwelt upon the storied past instead of looking forward. The lines are imitative in their rhythm assonance, alliterations, and suggestive balancings of sound. *See Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, 48 lines from end.
5. "Sheeny": Radiant.
10. "Golden prime": remote and magical time.
11. "Haroun Alraschid": Aaron the Orthodox, soldier, scholar, Caliph of Bagdad, died 809.
12. "Anight": by night.
13. "Bloomed": blossomy: "Drove": pushed its way through
15. "Citron-shadows," dark reflections of trees in the water.
23. "Platans": a bare-trunked wide-spreading plane-tree.
26. "Sluiced": drawn off, as by flood-gates.
28. "Damask-work": the shadows made rich designs.
34. "A motion .... won": a current from the river rippled the canal.
37. "Another . night": the shadows of trees deepen the shadows of night.
40. "Imprisoning sweets": holding the heavy fragrance.  
"Clomb": supplanted by *climbed*.
47. "Rivage": pronounce riv-aj.
48. "Diamond rillels musical": cascades flashing and singing in moonlight.
51. "Seemed to shake." The cascades rippled the water of the canal and made an illusion.
63. "Studded tiars": lavishly decorated with circular blossoms and spikes.
70. "Bulbul": the Persian Nightingale.
75. "Apart .... time": having a suggestion of freedom and infinity.



76. "Flattering": making radiant.
81. "A sudden splendour," the emphasis of 'black' is explained by this contrast.
84. "Counterchanged": dashed, patched.
91. "Grew .... underflame": by contrast.
93. "Left afloat": attributive to boat.
95. "As in sleep": as if in sleep.
101. "A realm of pleasance": Haroun's Garden of Pleasure, containing the Palace of Pleasure and the Pavilion of Pictures. Pleasance or plesance (F. *plaisance*) is found in Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare.
103. "Stilly," poetical form of still.
104. "Deep myrrh-thickets blowing," blossoming shrubs of myrrh. A shrub exuding an amber-coloured aromatic gum.
106. "Rosaries of scented thorn." According to Webster's International Dictionary (V. *rosary*) this means beds of roses.
- 107, 108. "Obelisks .... time": characteristic of the east.
114. "Pavilion .... Caliphat." (pr. *cāl-ī-phāt*, usually spelt caliphate.) The Pavilion of Pictures, the seat of the government of the Caliph.
122. "Fourscore." There were eighty windows and eighty lamps.
123. "The quintessence of flame": the fifth element, the most refined essence; white, pure, clear, like an arc-light.
125. "Looked to shame": caused it to flee.
134. Persian girl. Anis al-Janis the Fair Persian.
135. "Argent-lidded," the lids smooth, fair, and composed. In heraldry argent=white. See *Dream of Fair Women*, 158.
- 136, 137. "Rays of Darkness": A fine oxymoron for glossy eyelashes.
138. "Redolent ebony," black curls diffusing fragrance.
140. "Flowing .... zone": falling below her waist.
- 145, 146, 147. The lines run into each other to express the breathless excitement and pleasure.
148. "Diaper'd": ornamented with figures.

## THE POET.

The *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* is a lyrical and descriptive poem; a poem of feeling and perception; *The Poet* is a lyrical and reflective poem, a poem of feeling and thought. It consists of sixteen quatrains; each quatrain is made up of (1) an iambic pentameter, (2) an iambic trimeter, (3) an iambic pentameter, (4) an iambic dimeter. The iambic pentameter is the accepted line for thoughtful English verse, and its union here with the shorter lyrical lines has the effect of reinforcing the general effect of the whole piece, that is, a mingling of calm and dignified thought with quiet but intense feeling.

In reading the preceding poem a quiet tone of childlike delight and freshness would be appropriate; in reading *The Poet* a quiet tone of profound thoughtfulness, mingled with religious respect for the ideal described, would best convey the colouring of the theme; if it sounds pathetic it is because all songs of worship remind us of the gap between the ideal and the real. What must be eschewed in reading these poems is what is commonly known as 'splendid reading,' that is to say, exaggeration of emphasis, declamatory enunciation, hollow pretence of feeling and profundity.

When we compare this poem with the *Recollections* we are struck by the difference, the former showing a desire to please the fancy by lovely sights, scenes and sounds, the latter appealing to the imagination through the intellect. We are forcibly reminded of the range and depth of Tennyson's genius. To him, beauty was never confined long to the senses, its noble forms always swayed the mind and heart and aroused aspirations for character and principle.

The student of literature will always find a peculiar pleasure in hearing what a poet has to say about poets and poetry. When Shakespeare speaks of imagination, when Milton tells us

that poetry must be "simple, sensuous, passionate," when Gray tells us of the progress of poesy, we feel that we are learning from the most capable teachers. This is especially true of great poets; the minor poets are sometimes prejudiced by their own special tendencies, as when Edgar Poe describes the requirements of poetry as if he thought only of his own.

In *The Poet* Tennyson tells us the best that can be said about the temperament, genius and work of the ideally great poet. His great hereditary endowments, his happy environments, his large deep culture, his dissemination in the spirit of divine enthusiasm of the fertile seeds of wisdom which have ripened in himself, the gift of expression which makes his wisdom accepted, these are the attributes of the poet. He imparts the truth and the truth makes men free. Men feel freer because Shakespeare lived and wrote, free from ignorance and superstition, free from false and narrow standards, free from petty asceticism, free from withered cynicism because no man can say life is not worth living when so great a man found it full of interest. Wisdom and freedom are found to be one, the poet is the teacher of wisdom. he prepares the way for freedom after the sword has failed; every word is levelled "at the eyes of ignorance;" learning and character acquire their true influence and the spirit of man is pierced by a power which surpasses force and violence. There is something sublime in the power of the poet, his lack of physical prestige and opulence is contrasted with the conquering energy of his heart and brain.

There is no mistaking the earnest purport of this line of thought; no poet knew better than Tennyson, the goodness and wholesomeness of sensuously beautiful poetry rightly enjoyed, but in *The Poet* he tells us in a manner not to be misunderstood that great poetry is the power of wisdom used on behalf of a freer and stronger intellectual life for the whole world.

3, 4. "hate...love." Hate of hate might mean, hatred in a high degree, or hatred of the quality of hatred in others or wherever occurring. In our opinion the couplet means that a poet naturally hates strife, regards scorn and contempt as a sign of weakness, and is in love with kindness and good-will.

Some think the lines bear a third meaning: the poet is happy in being hated by the bad, scorned by the scornful, loved by the loving.

5, 8. Those four lines are in striking contrast to the doubt and gloom of Rossetti's poem *The Cloud Confines*, which that poet wrote in deep gloom. Tennyson says that a great poet comprehends man and the purpose of destiny of his existence.

13. "Indian reeds." In South America some of the Indians kill their game by blowing arrows through long tubes.

15. "Calpe." Gibraltar.

19. "field-flower." Dandelion. This figure explains many phrases which follow as, "a flower all gold," "winged shafts," "gird their orbs with beams."

39. "Rites and forms." Compare the lines on conventional evils in *Locksley Hall*.

45, 47. It may not injure the pupil's admiration for these lines to learn that they were, before 1842, printed in the following form,

"And in the bordure of her robe was writ  
Wisdom—a name to shake  
Hoar anarchies, as with a thunder-fit."

49, 53. Shakespeare says (*V. and A.* 461).

"Like the deadly bullet of a gun,  
His meaning struck her ere his words begun."

The flash of lightning precedes the thunder as the meaning of the spirit of wisdom, or true freedom, comes before it is formulated in words. The poet brought wisdom to men, and his truth set them free; then they began to see that his words had been of tremendous import.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Translated into simple prose by Mr. Andrew Lang, this story might very well take a place in *The Blue Fairy Book*. It appears to have been meant as a fairy tale, and if it suggests meanings far deeper than a mere story involves, it differs in that respect not at all from the works of Perrault, Grimm, Hans Andersen, Madame d'Aulnoy, and others. Mature readers of fairy tales are aware that it is seldom possible to make a didactic theory to fit a story even when it is crammed full of symbolism. Take for example the jungle stories of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, they continually suggest psychological, artistic and sociological ideas of profound and living interest, yet by no process can any story be explained as a consistent treatment of any one theme.

Coleridge's masterpiece *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has suffered violence at the hands of those who can never understand that a work may be soundly and greatly moral without including paraphrases of universally known axioms of morality, and without having any specific didactic purpose. It is a fundamental idea in literature that any work which satisfies the human desire for pleasure by offering refined, innocent and ennobling pictures or stories to the imagination is doing a great moral work, and when the readers have been already properly instructed in morals such a work does them perhaps the greatest moral good that can be done them. Coleridge replying to one who complained that the *Ancient Mariner* had no moral, replied that in his judgment the poem had too much, and that its only or chief fault was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. Hence we learn that in that great poem the author repudiates the notion of teaching morality in the narrow utilitarian sense; yet that is a poem in which it is possible to establish in a tolerably clear

manner a theory of didactic purpose which goes far to account consistently for all the action of the piece. How much more may we suppose that Tennyson would be merely annoyed or amused at those who insist upon reading an abstract lesson into his charming little lyrical Fairy-tale, *The Lady of Shalott*. Probably what he would have desired would have been the praise of the young, or the young in heart, though in a quiet way he had offered the graver and more philosophical much cause for reflection.

What reader of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* has not stopped at times to wonder whether that lovely phantasy had not some serious theme beneath all the moonlight and glamour, and flutter of wings, but is it not quite certain that after all it does us more good, and hence is more moral, as a dream than as a sermon ; particularly since we have Tupper and the *Psalm of Life* always and multitudinously with us.

The golden valley, the breeze-shadowed river, the lily-circled island, with its gray castle and its enchanted lady, the web and the mirrors, the knight and his charger, the boat and its burden lovely in death, these are the material of which painters make pictures to rest and please the eye, and poets make verses to rest and please the mind's eye. Then too, there is a story into which these pictures are woven ; there was, once upon a time, a river, flowing through a happy and industrious valley ; in the river was a happy island, where lived a lady, who was under a mysterious spell imposed by no one knows whom ; the lady was forbidden to look down toward the neighbouring city ; but in her mirror she sees at last a figure which she *must* see in reality ; she looks, and the curse falls from the hands of the mysterious power which rules her.

With all his love of picture and story Tennyson had a strongly practical turn of mind. Because he will not announce in glowing prophecy that the human race is on the verge of the millennium he is charged with being cold and pessimistic ;

though in reality he was too well balanced and too Shakespearean in common-sense to be wildly optimistic. This practical sense has led him invariably when dealing with classical or mediæval tales to show the bearing of those tales upon modern life: *Ulysses* is modern as well as ancient, *Tithonus* and the *Lotos-Eaters* have obvious modern applications; so have the legends of the round-table as he treats them. Hence it is right and natural that students should seek for the practical significance of *The Lady of Shalott*, and no doubt it has practical every-day bearings; the mistake is to suppose that it is a systematically didactic treatment of some particular modern theme. The truth seems to be that the moral suggestions are used to justify and lend human interest to the pictures and the story, rather than that the pictures and the story are used to clothe and embellish a lesson.

In modern times there is a class of people who are brought up in a refined seclusion, whose interest in the work-a-day world is aesthetic and speculative rather than direct and practical; these people read about life and hear about life and fill their minds with pictures more or less fanciful of what their less cultivated contemporaries think, feel, and do. When they are brought, as they sometimes are, into sudden and intimate relationship with affairs as they are, their ideal conceptions are rudely disturbed and they lack both the knowledge and the elasticity of temper to cope with the far from ideal facts of life. The result is disastrous, often tragical, and yet the result appears to be less the fault of those beautiful idealists than of the hard conditions of reality; they are like bright waves dashing themselves to pieces upon ugly rocks. George Meredith bears testimony to the fact that this pleasing but ill-equipped type of character is common among English women, and probably Tennyson had observed that a warning against ignorance of worldly wisdom was not uncalled for in his class and generation. In this way of looking at the poem the

island is a symbol of seclusion, the upland farms and the road to the city with the farmers and travellers symbolize real life, the mirrors stand for books and hearsay, the web for the fancy and fiction of the solitary student of affairs, the knight for the cause of interest in actual life, and the failure and death for the result of ignorance of the means by which success is achieved in the existing state of things. This view is not without support in the story of Elaine, whose ingenuous devotion is powerless against the charms of the magnificent Guinevere. Shakespeare's most touching tragedy relates how Othello and Desdemona were duped and destroyed through similar ignorance of the ways of the world.

The form of this poem is such as to indicate that it is not to be taken more seriously than as a fairy-tale, both the rhythm and the rhyme arrangement are suited to picturesque narrative and harmonize both with the brilliant descriptions and with the light and tender pathos, like that of a ballad, with which the story ends.

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3. **wold.** Undulating land.

5. **many tower'd Camelot.** For Camelot see note on line 7 of *The Holy Grail*. The epithet suggests the majesty of the city. Such expressions as "many-fountained," "many-knotted," are common in Tennyson; they are imitated from the epithets in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

10. Under the influence of the breeze the underside of willow leaves shows, and the willows are blown white. The *aspen* is a sort of poplar, the leaves very easily moved by the wind. It, like the willow, whitens under the breeze, but the word "quiver" brings out its distinguishing quality.

11. **dusk and shiver thro' the wave.** Run over the surface of the water, and thus cause it to darken and tremble.

17. **imbowers.** Holds in seclusion. A bower (A.S. *bur*, a chamber) is a shelter made with the boughs of trees.

30. **cheerly.** Brightly, cheerfully. The Lady's seclusion was a happy one.



38. **A magic web with colors gay.** Allegorically the idealistic conception of things, bright with touches of fancy.

40. **if she stay to look down to Camelot.** If she give up her fancies to look on the busy world as it is.

48. **Shadows of the world.** Dim representations of the world such as one might find in poetry and romance.

56. **ambling pad.** An easy-paced horse.

60-71. These lines trace the change that came over the Lady of Shalott: line 62 suggests a want and desire of her nature; she continues to delight in her imaginings, and some knowledge of death and love comes to her; the frequency of death warns her that life is to be seized quickly, and the sweetness of love allures her to a more real existence.

76. **greaves.** Armour for the lower part of the legs.

79. On his shield there was the representation of a knight kneeling to a lady. A red cross on a white ground is the cross of St. George of England.

80. The sun-lighted shield shone out on the background of the barley-field.

83, 84. Like a constellation of stars in the Milky Way.

87. **blazon'd baldric.** Shoulder-belt ornamented richly with heraldic figures.

98. **bearded meteor.** The epithet refers to the line of light following a meteor.

105. The reflection of Sir Lancelot on the bank and of his image in the water was seen in the mirror.

114. **floated wide.** Her fanciful pictures were vanishing from contact with reality.

118. Note the changed tone of the picture. Harvest has passed into autumn.

129. **mischance.** Evil destiny.

130. **glassy.** With eyes and features fixed and expressionless.

157. Which do you prefer—"dead-pale" or the original reading, "a corse"?

165. **royal cheer.** The King's banquet; joyous, regal entertainment.

170. May God have mercy on her soul.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

The name of this poem gives us a clear idea of the theme. It must be studied side by side with *Ulysses* if the full import is to be learned :

“How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rest unburnished, not to shine in use!  
As tho' to breathe were life.”

What a reply to the seductive music of the Lotos-Eaters does the grand old man give in the last words of his life :

“Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows, for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.”

It is the spirit of Columbus, and in a slightly different sense, of Galileo, and Newton, and Darwin. “One must live for the effort of living, for the stone to be carried to the distant and unknown work, and the only possible peace in this world is in the joy of making this effort.” The spirit of enterprise and hard work is with the great peoples a passion ; they will explore the sky and the ocean seemingly from the love of endurance and effort, and they get their reward in the most unexpected ways, discovering modern mechanics, new continents, even new forces of nature.

*Ulysses* symbolizes effort, experience, endurance and consequent faith, hope, ambition, perennial youth. The *Lotos-Eaters* symbolizes ease, luxury, listlessness, and consequent doubt, cynicism, complaint, irreverence. Even Carlyle has not given us a more powerful exhortation to work than we find in these impressive poems.

Each has its own beauty, the beauty of each being beyond praise or interpretation.

We cannot give a reason for the pleasure these works give us because that pleasure lies midway between the intellect

and the heart. They seem to be the perfect work of their author, never surpassed in their kind by him or by any other poet. And they are of a high kind, being as truly specimens of dramatic imagination, though limited in extent, as any work of any dramatist. These poems, together with *Cenone* and *Tithonus* are so great and so entirely pleasing that it may be doubted whether the world of letters has anything better to offer. Their subjects are of universal interest ; *work, life, death, wisdom, power, love* ; their form is the highest known in art, *dramatic* ; their melody is so great that they might rest on their merits as music ; their pictures are so exquisite that transformed with adequate skill to canvas they would be dreams of beauty and power ; and their language is the sufficient expression of what they themselves are.

If anyone desired to know as much of Tennyson's power as four of his shorter poems could give he would find these four most characteristic and instructive.

A great deal has been said about the sources of *The Lotos-Eaters*. The first suggestion comes from Homer :

Meanwhile the God whose hand the thunder forns,  
 Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heaven with storms!  
 Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,  
 And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps,  
 Now here, now there, the giddy ships are borne,  
 And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn.  
 We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the labouring oar,  
 Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.  
 Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,  
 O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.  
 But the third morning when Aurora brings,  
 We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings ;  
 Refresh'd and careless on the deck reclin'd,  
 We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.  
 Then to my native country had I sail'd ;  
 But the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd.  
 Strong was the tide, which, by the northern blast  
 Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.  
 Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore  
 Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore :  
 The tenth we touch'd, by various errors tost,  
 The land of Lotos and the flowery coast.

We climb'd the beach, and *springs of water found*  
 Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.  
 Three men were sent, deputed from the crew  
 (An herald one), the dubious coasts to view,  
 And learn what habitants possess the place.  
 They went and found a hospitable race:  
 Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,  
 They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast;  
 The trees around them all their food produce;  
 Lotos, the name; divine, nectareous juice!  
 (Thence call'd *Lotophagi*); which whoso tastes,  
 Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,  
 No other home, nor other care intends,  
 But quits his house, his country, and his friends.  
 The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground  
 We drag'd reluctant, and by force we bound:  
 The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,  
 Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.  
 Now placed in order, on their banks, they sweep  
 The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep;  
 With heavy hearts we laboured through the tide  
 To coasts unknown, and ocean yet untry'd.

This passage (Odyssey IX.) as translated by Pope, gives us a very clear idea of the simple frame-work which the art of Tennyson was to cover and decorate. If we turn now to the *Victorian Poets* we find certain passages from the Greek poets Theocritus and Moschus which Mr. Stedman thinks may have haunted the mind of Tennyson as he wrote:

*Europa* (Mosch., II. 3, 4).

"When Sleep, that sweeter on the eyelids lies  
 Than honey, and doth fetter down the eyes  
 With gentle bond."

*The Wayfarers* (Theocr., V. 50, 51).

"Here if you come, your feet shall tread on wool,  
 The fleece of lambs, softer than downy Sleep."

*Ibid.* (45-49).

"Here are the oaks, and here is galingale,  
 Here bees are sweetly humming near their hives;  
 Here are twin fountains of cool water; here  
 The birds are prattling on the trees,—the shade  
 Is deeper than beyond; and here the pine  
 From overhead casts down to us its cones."

*Ibid.* (31, 34).

“ More sweetly will you sing  
Propt underneath the olive, in these groves.  
Here are cool waters plashing down, and here  
The grasses spring ; and here too, is a bed  
Of leafage, and the locusts babble here.”

*The Choice* (Mosch., V. 4-13).

“ When the gray deep has sounded, and the sea  
Climbs up in foam and far the loud waves roar,  
I seek for land and trees, and flee the brine,  
And earth to me is welcome : the dark wood  
Delights me, where, although the great wind blow,  
The pine-tree sings. An evil life indeed  
The fisherman's whose vessel is his home,  
The sea his toil, the fish his wandering prey.  
But sweet to me to sleep beneath the plane  
Thick-leaved ; and near me I would love to hear  
The babble of the spring, that murmuring  
Perturbs him not, but is the woodman's joy.”

The Spenserian stanzas used throughout the introduction suggest Spenser and his great disciple Thomson. And indeed whoever will read attentively the sixth Canto of the second book of *The Faery Queen*, will find more resemblances than Mr. Stedman has pointed out above. There is also a marked likeness between the *Lotos-Eaters* and the first stanzas of the *Castle of Indolence*.

If a poet of great genius is pleased to handle once more a subject which has been pleasing to poets from Homer, Solomon and Theocritus, to the present day, no reader of judgment will think it worth while to defend his originality against those who see plagiarism in all resemblances. No one should ask of a picture that it should be the first treatment of its theme, but only that it should be full of power and life and beauty. Those who study the *Lotos-Eaters* side by side with the older works will be equally struck by the greatness of the old masters and by the more intense and perfect beauty of the modern artist.

The line of thought in *The Lotos-Eaters* is, for the most part, easily intelligible. The Greeks come within sight of land ; as they draw near the poet describes the landscape ; the natives

appear; their narcotic is described; the effect of this enchanted land upon the Greeks is set forth. Then follows the choric song. The strikingly antiphonal character of this song is obvious; it is interesting to endeavour to assign the parts to the different sections of the Greeks. The ideas of the choric song are all in harmony with the one idea of the beauty of indolence and the uselessness of effort. Sweet music and rest, the weariness of toil, the example of Nature, who, in this afternoon region, appears thoroughly luxurious, the ineffectualness of troubling, the sweetness of melancholy, the difficulty of restoring order in Ithaca, the sweetness of rest and music—these ideas, elaborated most softly and persuasively, fill the first seven sections of the anthem; but the bearing of the eighth is not quite so certain. The Lotos tempts us; let us be as gods; slumber is better than toil. What is the attitude towards the gods here? If we regard the probable views of the Greeks themselves, we may read in this passage only the culmination of the desire of peace and pleasure. Had Ulysses lived a few centuries later we might suppose his sailors to be turning Epicureans. But if this poem, like the other poems in which Tennyson treats the ancient and mediæval myths, has a more or less didactic bearing upon modern ideas, the references to the indifference of the gods and to the prayers of an ill-used race of men are a reflection of the evil influences upon the character of moral judgment which comes from not living in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the judgment itself.

This poem in its present form has grown from a slight sketch in the edition of 1830 by changes in 1833 and 1842. Its verse form is admirably suited to description of this luxurious kind, and the gradual extension of the stanza forms from the beginning to the end of the song has a certain suggestion of the increasing languor and apathy of the Greeks.

In studying the poem much attention should be given to the pictures it suggests; unsuspected harmonies of language,

tone-colour and detail will discover themselves upon minute and imaginative reading.

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1. **he.** Ulysses, the leader of the expedition.

4. In which things seemed in a state of unchanging languor. The morning is the season for brightness and vigour.

6. Breathing with a half sigh. Compare line 345 of *The Passing of Arthur*.

11. **veils of thinnest lawn.** This bold metaphor suggesting the likeness of the filmy fluttering sheet of falling water to the thin slowly-falling white cloth is justified by careful observers. Our river Rideau (curtain) was so called by some one who had made an observation similar to Tennyson's.

18. On the mountains the pines are seen rising above the underbrush on the slopes.

21. **yellow down.** The lotos-covered hill.

23. A plant found in lowlands, mentioned frequently by the ancient poets.

26. The rosy background gave their faces a wan look.

32. The sound of the waves no longer called to mind their island home.

38. See "Full-faced above the valley stood the moon," and "The charmed sunset lingered low adown;" the shore faced the west and the moon was rising in the east.

44. **Our island home.** Ithaca was the home of Ulysses and his followers.

For imitations of the Greek chorus see Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*.

49. The epithet "gleaming" refers to the play of the evening lights on the water and rocks.

50. "When sleep that sweeter on the eyelids lies  
Than honey, and doth fetter down the eyes  
With gentle band."

Moschus, *Idyll* ii., 3-5.

55. the long-leaved flowers weep, the water-flowers droop with their long leaves in the water.

63. still,—ever.

66. slumber's holy balm.

“The innocent sleep ;  
Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,  
*Balm of hurt minds*, great nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast.”

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, II., ii.

69. the roof and crown of things. Nature's consummate product.

71. The bud is gently unfolded into a leaf by the influences of the atmosphere ; *with* was frequently used for “by” in older English.

83. This line suggests a contrast with “the wandering fields of barren foam.”

85. vaulted, Hanging in an arch.

86, 87. “If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”—I, Cor., xv. 32.

88. Let us alone. The repetition of this clause, the frequent interrogations and the varied versification render this stanza especially effective.

96. ripen towards the grave. The allusion is to the leaves, fruits and flowers mentioned in the previous stanza.

102. yonder amber light, the golden rays of the sunset.

103. Which will not leave, “The charmed sunset linger'd.”

106. crisping (Latin, *crispus*), curling.

112, 113. These lines lack definiteness and reflect the dreamy mood of the singers.

118. inherit us, have succeeded to our possessions.

120. As related by Homer in the first book of the *Odyssey*, the princes from the islands of Samos, Dulichium and Zacynthos repaired to Ithaca as suitors to Ulysses' wife Penelope, and, in spite of the young prince Telemachus, lived lavishly at her expense.

121. minstrel. Phemius was the name of the minstrel at the court of Ithaca.

125. what is broken, what is in a state of disruption.



126. It is hard to bring good out of evil. The anger of the gods caused the misfortunes of men ; therefore to remove misfortune the gods had to be propitiated.

128. See *In Memoriam*, xc.

131. **pilot-stars**, stars, such as the North Star, by which the steersman kept his course.

133. **amaranth**, a fabulous flower that was said never to fade.

**moly**, a fabulous plant said to have been used by Ulysses as a safeguard against the charms of Circe.

135. **still**, an adjective, motionless.

141. **acanthus**, a plant called also bear's beech or brank ursine.

143, 144. "Only to hear and see," not to act ; "only to hear," not to act nor see.

148. **alley** is used in its primitive sense, a way. (Fr. *allée*).

149. Note the change in metre at this point.

151. **the wallowing monster**, the whale.

153. **equal mind**.

Aequam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem.

Horace, *Odes*, ii., 3, 1.

156.

Sie aber, sie bleiben  
In ewigen Festen  
An goldenen Tischen.  
Sie schreiten vom Berge  
Zu Bergen hinüber :  
Aus schlinden der Tiefe  
Dampft ihnen der Athem  
Erstickter Titanen,  
Gleich Opfergerüchen,  
Ein leichtes Gewölke.

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

**bolts**, thunder bolts supposed to be hurled by the gods.

158. **gleaming**. This epithet may mean glittering with stars. Tennyson frequently uses it in the sense "shining dimly."

160. **roaring deeps and fiery sands**, tumultuous seas and burning deserts.

161. **a music centred in a doleful song**. The woes of mankind please the gods like a pathetic song. Compare "The still sad music of humanity" (Wordsworth), or "The song the sea [of life] sings is dark everlastingly" (Rossetti).

164.

“Out, out, brief candle !  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more : it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.”

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, v., 5.

167. dues, the results of their labour.

169. Elysium was the Homeric Paradise.

170. asphodel, the day-lily. This plant was sacred to Proserpina.

## MORTE D' ARTHUR.

This poem was published with a brief introduction and conclusion in 1842. The materials and name were taken from Malory's version of the Arthurian legend; this old volume to which Tennyson stands so deeply indebted is called *Morte Darthur*. It seems that our poet at an early date had intended to construct an epic based on the legendary records of the British hero, a theme which at one time attracted Milton. Whether at the date of the publication of the *Morte d' Arthur* Tennyson had made some attempts, unsuccessful to his thinking, to fill out a connected story of the Round Table is doubtful, but he had undoubtedly surveyed the ground and pitched upon Malory as the chief authority to be followed. In 1870 the *Morte d' Arthur* with an introduction of 169 lines and an addition of 29 was formed into *The Passing of Arthur*, the last of the Idylls of the King. The fragment forms a contrast with the introductory and concluding lines of the Idyll and also with many other parts of the completed epic in one respect: the story is told with marked frankness and directness, with very little symbolism or allegory.

Guinevere when her love for Lancelot had been discovered by Modred, fled from the court at Camelot to the abbey at Almesbury. Arthur marched north to war against Lancelot, and Modred seizing his opportunity raised a revolt against the king and leagued with the heathen. Arthur returned from the north, on his way west at Almesbury bade farewell to Guinevere, and came up with Modred on the coast of Lyonesse in the extreme south-west. Here was fought a dim battle in the mist, at the conclusion of which Arthur, Bedivere and Modred alone remain on the field. The king attacks Modred, is cut through the helm, but slays his foe with a blow of his brand Excalibur.

1.\* Sir Bedivere. Lines 172-6 of *The Coming of Arthur* read :

“ There Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning spoke—  
 For bold in heart and act and word was he,  
 Whenever slander breathed against the king.”

*Bold* is a permanent epithet. Similarly Achilles in the *Iliad* is always called the “Swift-footed.”

3. The materials of this story are represented as furnished by Bedivere ; but the Knight does not tell the tale, as Percivale tells the story of the Holy Grail to Ambrosius.

## 6. See Guinevere :

“ They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
 Far down to that great battle in the west,  
 There I must strike against the man they call  
 My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues  
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen and Knights,  
 Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself  
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.”

9-12. Arthur found God revealed in nature, but not in the history of the Round Table for his own labours seemed profitless.

14-17. The teaching of the Gnostics was that the world had been created and was controlled by a minor divinity. Such being the case, difficulties could be corrected only by the interposition of some superior power—the High God.

23. Mrs. Ritchie writes : The first *Idyll* and the last, I have heard Mr. Tennyson say, are intentionally more archaic than the others.

24. Arthur refers to the infidelity of Guinevere and Lancelot.

26. This same line occurs in *The Last Tournament*, line 125. See also lines 234-7 of *The Holy Grail*.

27. This line recalls the cry “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Arthur as a type of perfect manhood has a necessary similarity to Christ. Tennyson recognizes and emphasizes this similarity, so that Arthur becomes a Christ portrayed as a king in a chivalric age.

29. *Weird* was originally a noun meaning *fate* ; it came to mean *fatal*, *peculiar*, *fantastic*.

30. Gawain. See note on line 202 of *The Holy Grail*.

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\* It has been thought best to annotate the whole work, *The Passing of Arthur*, instead of *The Morte d'Arthur*.

**31. Lancelot's War.** The war waged by Arthur against Lancelot after the discovery of Guinevere's treachery.

**31-2. Blown along a wandering wind.** Such according to Dante is the punishment of "Carnal Sinners." In Pelleas and Ettarre Gawain is spoken of as one "Whom men call light of love."

**35.** See 427. Gawain's spirit bears to Arthur a prophecy of "The island-valley of Avilion."

**43-4.** Compare lines 457-461.

**48. All that haunts the waste and wild.** All spirits and fairies and romantic charm pass away with Arthur.

**52. Harmless glamour of the field.** The fanciful charm with which nature was invested in the mythical times of King Arthur.

**59. Modred.** The brother of Gawain and Gareth and son of Lot, King of Orkney, and Bellicent, daughter of Gorlois. According to Arthur's detractors the King was son of Gorlois and hence Modred's uncle. Modred was cunning and treacherous.

**63.** All the doubts and mystery concerning Arthur's birth are expressed in *The Coming of Arthur*. His right to be king is never proved, except to the hearts of those who divine his worthiness to reign.

**68-9.** Arthur overcame the Romans, the Picts and Scots, and the Saxons.

**77.** At Almesbury near Salisbury was an abbey of Benedictine nuns to which the Queen fled after Modred exposed her infidelity. See *Guinevere*. The King divorced from his Queen, finds himself in doubt and confusion. This has an allegorical significance. The Soul is most thoroughly itself when working in harmony with Sense.

**81. Lyonesse**—According to the old legendary geography a district stretching south and west from Cornwall. Tennyson describes it as of volcanic origin.

**87.** This line describes the horizon, ever shifting as the traveller approaches.

**91.** See line 469.

**94.** In *Merlin and Vivien* Tennyson represents the Seer as filled with a foreboding of this conflict.

"An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
World-war of dying flesh against the life."

109-10. This Idyll is, as might be expected, full of allusions to the previous parts of the epic. These fine harmonious lines mournfully recall the enthusiastic song of the Knights in *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 481-501.

114. **Monstrous blasphemies.** In the vision of the battle of Armageddon men "Blasphemed the name of God." *Rev. 16.*

119. **Or thro' death.** Either because the sufferer was dead.

135. The end of an era had come and a new era was to begin.

142. **As tho' they had not died for me.** Arthur's supporters were to fall a prey to oblivion, just as though they had not fallen fighting for the good.

151. **Who.** He who.

155. **Of my house :** an objective predicate adjective.

157. "And he stretched forth his hand to his disciples and said 'Behold my mother and my brother ! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" *Luke XII, 49-50.*

163. **Excalibur.** Arthur's magic sword given him by the Lady of the Lake. The name is of Celtic origin and means "cut-steel."

170. Here begins Tennyson's original *Morte d' Arthur* (1842) ; it runs to line 440. The transition does not seem perfect.

178. **Strait.** A narrow strip of land. Latin *strictus*.

180. **A great water.** The mere.

182. **The sequel of to-day unsolders.** The consequence of this battle is to disunite.

185. **I think that we, etc.** What is there in this sentence that gives so much dignity to the utterance ?

189. **Camelot.** See the note on line 7 of *The Holy Grail*.

191. **Merlin.** See *Merlin and Vivien*.

197-201. A fuller account of this incident is found in *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 294-308.

202. **I am sung or told.** *Sing* is used in English as a transitive verb meaning 'to celebrate in song.' Tennyson boldly uses this passive construction to mean "My fame is set forth in song or story."

**205.** Middle mere. The middle of the mere. Compare *medium flumen*.

**214.** Place of tombs. This expression is at once dignified and simple, and in harmony with the following lines.

**219.** Came to the lake beach whence the water was to be seen as "a series of flashing surfaces."

**228.** "Animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc," 'he divides his swift mind now this way, now that.' Vergil, *Aeneid* VIII., 20.

**229.** In act to throw. This expression is also suggestive of the classics; Pope uses it in his translation of the *Iliad*, III., 349.

**231.** Many knotted water-flags. Aquatic plants of the genus *Iris*. They grow in sections and are frequently intertwined closely.

**241.** Thy nature and thy name. Your character and reputation of a straightforward, honourable man.

**243.** Fëalty. The allegiance of a vassal to his lord. This word is the same origin as "fidelity,"—Latin *fidelis*.

**248.** Lief. Beloved. Arthur appeals to Bedivere's regard for his affection.

**254-5.** He smote his palms together. This gesture accompanies the sudden determination to disobey the king.

**255-277.** There is a striking similarity between this soliloquy of Bedivere's and soliloquies in Shakespeare and Milton. Bedivere has already determined not to throw the sword away, and examines the question from a prejudiced standpoint, seeking to satisfy his conscience in the course he is about to pursue. He makes his reason the advocate of his desires while making a show of maintaining a judicial attitude.

**262.** Obedience binds the inferior to the superior and makes government possible.

**267.** empty breath. Unsubstantiated reports.

**277.** But now. But in case I should cast the sword away.

**279.** conceit. Sophistical reasoning. This word is of the same derivation as *concept*, *conception* and *conceive*—Latin *con* and *capio*.

**280.** These repeated lines give the *Idyll* a tone of archaic simplicity. This line is almost painfully harmonious.

189. "This personification is thoroughly Shakespearian ; it assists the imagination without distressing the understanding, as when dwelt on and expanded in detail ; deepening the impression of the sentiment by giving along with a true thought a grand picture."

196. Arthur still carries on the conflict against the powers of Sense, and his anger is not to be explained here as mere petulance.

104. **The great brand,** etc. This part of the story could not be told by Bedivere ; see line 326.

307. **a streamer of the northern morn.** A varying flash of light from the *Aurora Borealis*.

308. **the moving isles of winter shock.** The icebergs strike one another.

312. This line is identical with line 327 and also with line 283 of *The Coming of Arthur*.

320, 324. Bedivere's enthusiasm here shows what was the real motive of his former disobedience.

331. 'tis time that I were gone. The King feared he had not made sufficient haste, and that he might die ere he should be borne away. The death is carefully identified with the passing, so that the reader's credulity is not abused.

338. "She cast at each of those who sacrificed a piteous glance, gazing as one in a picture." Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 240.

345. This line not only serves to tell how the king panted but suggests his feeling of powerless impatience.

352. He was going towards the mere and the ocean lay behind. See lines 179, 180.

353. *His own thought.* The thought of his disobedience and the consequent delay.

354—60. Attention has been drawn to these lines as one of the finest instances of Tennyson's power of making the sound an echo of the sense.

359, 360. Compare these lines with line 219.

365. **Black-stoled.** Clad in long, loose robes of black, *like a dream—by these three queens with crowns of gold.* This passage is, perhaps intentionally, obscure.

367. A cry that went pulsating towards the stars which seemed to tremble in harmony.



**381. wither'd moon.** The moon whitened and lessened by the sunlight.

**383. greaves and cuisses.** Armour for the lower part of the legs and armour for the thighs.

**384. onset.** As far as mere meaning is concerned 'blood' might be substituted, but *onset* has a powerful suggestion of daring and heroism, *drops of onset* is equivalent to 'drops of blood gained in the fierce heroic onslaught.'

**390. not like that Arthur, etc.** A contrasted picture of Arthur is here definitely set forth, but another contrast had already been suggested in "That (had) made his forehead like a rising sun" (385).

**398, 399.** For a description of this time see *Gareth and Lynette*.

**401.** See Bible, *Matthew*, ii. 11. The time referred to is of course that of the birth of Christ.

**403.** "Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right." Malory (1470). Tennyson does not mean the same by 'mighty world' as Malory did by the word 'world,' which is evidently synonymous with 'earth' as he uses it. Here is an interesting instance of the growth of the epic. Malory ascribes to Merlin a knowledge that belonged to a much later period, and Tennyson in turn gives Malory's statement a wider and subtler significance than it had with the author.

**406. strange faces, other minds.** These words are an echo from the fifth line of the *Idyll* and warn us that the poem approaches its conclusion. How well this expresses one's feelings in new surroundings.

**409, 410.** Arthur at the point of death is endowed with fresh faith and recognizes his reign as a stage in the social evolution of the race. The good is continually revealed to men under new aspects, so that their minds may be attracted to the spirit of truth.

**419.** The mental life of the animals is blind in the sense that animals although they receive certain impressions from the outside world, do not comprehend themselves as the knowing subjects and the outside phenomena as the known objects. It is reserved for man who is able to make clearly the distinction of subject and object to rise to the conception of deity. Tennyson asks what is the advantage of this intellect that enables men to know God, if they are not filled with devotion.

417, 431. This description was probably suggested by the classics; see Homer *Odyssey* IV. 566, and VI. 42. *Arilion* here treated as Elysium or the Islands of the Blest or Paradise is identified by scholars with a peninsula in Somersetshire.

435. See Tennyson's *The Dying Swan*.

440. This is the last line of Tennyson's original *Morte d'Arthur*.

445. This was Merlin's statement. See *The Coming of Arthur*, line

410. The Seer answered Bellicent's inquiries "in riddling triplets of old time."

451. **He comes again.** The legendary epitaph on Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury reads,—‘Hic jacet Arturus rex quondam rexque futurus.’

454. **On that high day.** See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 275-8.

Three fair Queens,  
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends  
Of Arthur gazing on him, tall, with bright  
Sweet faces who will help him at his need.

457, 461. Compare this passage with the description of the sounds that accompany Gawain's return to the other world, lines 41-5.

469. Arthur's birth was at the beginning of the new year, his marriage in May, the scenes of the Last Tournament occur in autumn and the king's death completes the cycle. The events as they progress have their appropriate seasons. *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur* are contrasted in many ways.

## THE DAY-DREAM.

Perrault and the Grimms published in different forms the fairy tale of *The Sleeping Beauty*, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*. and Tennyson, attracted by this ancient legend, has turned it into simple tetrameters, a highly appropriate form, such as a child may read with the pleasure he would find in *The Ugly Duckling* or *The Enchanted Pig*.

The Sleeping Beauty is condemned to sleep in an enchanted palace for a hundred years. A forest which none may pierce grows up to enclose the palace: but the young prince comes and disenchants the lady, and she goes away to live happily with her rescuer.

After the prologue begins the poet's version of the tale. The castle has been suddenly thrown into a trance: the lady is sleeping, calmly awaiting the coming of the fairy prince: the prince comes on a quest not known to himself; he breaks the spell; court, lady, household are all alive and awake: the lady follows her lover, over the hills and far away.

To children this is a bright emerald set in lead—the prologue and the moral, envoy, and epilogue are so much stupid writing which one must read just to make sure there is nothing interesting in them. But to the older reader the setting is of fine gold, and if the years that bring the philosophic mind have lowered the price of fairy love stories, the setting may outvalue the gem. The Poet's love for Lady Flora has an air of youthful intensity that pales the story of the Prince and the Sleeping Beauty; and the reflections on love and morality have the interest which such direct opinions from great poets always have.

There are some pleasing touches of harmony in this poem; the parallel between the story of the Sleeping Beauty and the Prince and the story of the Sleeping Lady Flora and the Poet,

seems capable of being carried on to any distance by the fancy; the work of the lady on the quaint Macaw (line 16) suggests the comparison of the body of the poem to a bird of Paradise.

As in *The Lady of Shalott*, there are suggestions here and there of questions more profound than the story as such is able to carry, but this is the mark of all famous fairy-tales. The central thought of the poem is that fundamental truth of poetic criticism, that beauty does not teach morality, because, rightly comprehended, it *is* morality, and there is no truth which has a more important bearing upon the conduct of life than the sacredness of true love.

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#### LA BELLE AU BOIS DORMANT.

Il y avait une fois un roi et une reine qui étaient si fâchés de n'avoir point d'enfants, si fâchés, qu'on ne saurait dire. Ils allèrent à toutes les eaux du monde : vœux, pèlerinages, tout fut mis en œuvre, et rien n'y faisait. Enfin pourtant la reine eut une fille. On fit un beau baptême ; on donna pour marraines à la petite princesse toutes les fées qu'on put trouver dans le pays (il s'en trouva sept), afin que, chacune d'elles lui faisant un don, comme c'était la coutume des fées en ce temps-là, la princesse eût par ce moyen toutes les perfections imaginables. Après les cérémonies du baptême, toute la compagnie revint au palais du roi, où il y avait un grand festin pour les fées. On mit devant chacune d'elles un couvert magnifique, avec un étui d'or massif, où il y avait une cuiller, une fourchette et un couteau de fin or, garnis de diamants et de rubis. Mais, comme chacun prenait sa place à table, on vit entrer une vieille fée qu'on n'avait point prîée, parce qu'il y avait plus de cinquante ans qu'elle n'était sortie d'une tour, et qu'on la croyait morte ou enchantée. Le roi lui fit donner un couvert ; mais il n'y eut pas moyen de lui donner un étui d'or massif comme aux autres, parce que l'on n'en avait fait que sept pour les sept fées. La vieille crut qu'on la méprisait, et grommela quelques menaces entre ses dents. Une des jeunes fées, qui se trouva auprès d'elle, l'entendit, et, jugeant qu'elle pourrait donner quelque fâcheux don à la petite princesse, alla, dès qu'on fut sorti de table, se cacher derrière la tapisserie, afin de parler la dernière, et de pouvoir réparer, autant qu'il lui serait possible, le mal que la vieille aurait fait. Cependant les fées commencèrent à faire leur don à la princesse. La plus jeune lui donna pour don qu'elle serait la plus belle personne du monde ; celle d'après, qu'elle aurait de l'esprit

comme un ange ; la troisième, qu'elle aurait une grâce admirable à tout ce qu'elle ferait : la quatrième, qu'elle danserait parfaitement bien ; la cinquième, qu'elle chanterait comme un rossignol, et la sixième, qu'elle jouerait de toutes sortes d'instruments dans la dernière perfection. Le rang de la vieille fée étant venu, elle dit en branlant la tête, encore plus de dépit que de vieillesse, que la princesse se percerait la main d'un fuseau, et qu'elle en mourrait. Ce terrible don fit frémir toute la compagnie, et il n'y eut personne qui ne pleurât. Dans ce moment, la jeune fée sortit de derrière la tapisserie, et dit tout haut ces paroles : Rassurez-vous, roi et reine, votre fille n'en mourra pas ; il est vrai que je n'ai pas assez de puissance pour défaire entièrement ce que mon ancienne a fait : la princesse se percerait la main d'un fuseau ; mais, au lieu d'en mourir, elle tombera seulement dans un profond sommeil qui durera cent ans, au bout desquels le fils d'un roi viendra la réveiller. Le roi, pour tâcher d'éviter le malheur annoncé par la vieille, fit publier aussitôt un édit par lequel il défendait à toutes personnes de filer au fuseau, ni d'avoir des fuseaux chez soi, sous peine de la vie. Au bout de quinze ou seize ans, le roi et la reine étant allés à une de leurs maisons de plaisance, il arriva que la jeune princesse, courant un jour dans le château, et montant de chambre en chambre, alla jusqu'au bout d'un donjon, dans un petit galetas, où une bonne vieille était seule à filer sa quenouille. Cette bonne femme n'avait point ouï parler des défenses que le roi avait faites de filer au fuseau. Que faites-vous là, ma bonne femme ? dit la princesse. Je file, ma belle enfant, lui répondit la vieille, qui ne la connaissait pas. Ah ! que cela est joli ! reprit la princesse ; comment faites-vous ? donnez-moi, que je voie si j'en ferais bien autant. Elle n'eut pas plus tôt pris le fuseau, que, comme elle était fort vive, un peu étourdie, et que d'ailleurs l'arrêt des fées l'ordonnait ainsi, elle s'en perça la main et tomba évanouie. La bonne vieille, bien embarrassée, cria au secours : on vint de tous côtés, on jette de l'eau au visage de la princesse, on la délace, on lui frappe dans les mains, on lui frotte les tempes avec de l'eau de la reine de Hongrie : mais rien ne la faisait revenir. Alors le roi, qui était monté au bruit, se souvint de la prédiction des fées, et, jugeant bien qu'il fallait que cela arrivât, puisque les fées l'avaient dit, il fit mettre la princesse dans le plus bel appartement du palais, sur un lit en broderies d'or et d'argent. On eût dit un ange, tant elle était belle ; car son évanouissement n'avait point ôté les couleurs vives de son teint : ses joues étaient incarnates, et ses lèvres comme du corail ; elle avait seulement les yeux fermés, mais on l'entendait respirer doucement, ce qui faisait voir qu'elle n'était pas morte. Le roi ordonna qu'on la laissât dormir en repos, jusqu'à ce que son heure de se réveiller fût venue. La bonne fée qui lui avait sauvé la vie en la condamnant à dormir cent ans, était dans le royaume de Matabin, à douze mille lieues de là, lorsque l'accident arriva à la princesse : mais elle en fut avertie en un instant par un petit nain qui avait des bottes de sept lieues (c'étaient des bottes avec lesquelles on faisait sept lieues d'une seule enjambée). La fée partit aussitôt, et on la vit au bout d'une heure arriver dans un chariot de feu, traîné par des dragons. Le roi alla lui présenter la main à la descente du chariot. Elle approuva tout ce qu'il avait fait ; mais comme elle était grandement prévoyante, elle pensa que quand la princesse viendrait à se réveiller, elle serait bien embarrassée toute

seule dans ce vieux château : voici ce qu'elle fit. Elle toucha de sa baguette tout ce qui était dans ce château (hors le roi et la reine), gouvernantes, filles d'honneur, femmes de chambre, gentilshommes, officiers, maîtres-d'hôtel, cuisiniers, marmitons, galopins, gardes, suisses, pages, valets de pied ; elle toucha aussi tous les chevaux qui étaient dans les écuries, avec les palefreniers, les gros mâtons de la basse-cour, et la petite *Pouffle*, petite chienne de la princesse, qui était auprès d'elle sur son lit. Dès qu'elle les eut touchés, ils s'endormirent tous, pour ne s'éveiller qu'en même temps que leur maîtresse, afin d'être toujours prêts à la servir quand elle en aurait besoin. Les broches mêmes qui étaient au feu toutes pleines de perdrix et de faisans, s'endormirent, et le feu aussi. Tout cela se fit en un moment ; les fées n'étaient pas longues à leur besogne. Alors le roi et la reine, après avoir baisé leur chère enfant sans qu'elle s'éveillât, sortirent du château, firent publier des défenses à qui que ce fût d'en approcher. Ces défenses n'étaient pas nécessaires ; car il crût dans un quart d'heure tout autour du parc une si grande quantité de grands arbres et de petits, de ronces et d'épines entrelacées les unes dans les autres, que bête ni homme n'y aurait pu passer ; en sorte qu'on ne voyait plus que le haut des tours du château, encore n'était-ce que de bien loin. On ne douta point que la fée n'eût encore fait là un tour de son métier, afin que la princesse, pendant qu'elle dormirait, n'eût rien à craindre des curieux.

Au bout de cent ans, le fils du roi qui régnait alors, et qui était d'une autre famille que la princesse endormie, étant allé à la chasse de ce côté-là, demanda ce que c'était que des tours qu'il voyait au-dessus d'un grand bois fort épais. Chacun lui répondit selon qu'il en avait ouï parler ; les uns disaient que c'était un vieux château où il revenait des esprits ; les autres, que tous les sorciers de la contrée y faisaient leur sabbat. La plus commune opinion était qu'un ogre y demeurerait, et que là il emportait tous les enfants qu'il pouvait attraper, pour pouvoir les manger à son aise et sans qu'on pût le suivre, ayant seul le pouvoir de se faire un passage au travers du bois. Le prince ne savait qu'en croire, lorsqu'un vieux paysan prit la parole, et dit : Mon prince, il y a plus de cinquante ans que j'ai ouï dire à mon père qu'il y avait dans ce château une princesse, la plus belle qu'on eût pu voir ; qu'elle devait y dormir cent ans, et quelle serait réveillée par le fils d'un roi, à qui elle était réservée. Le jeune prince, à ce discours, se sentit tout de feu ; il crut, sans balancer, qu'il mettrait fin à une si belle aventure ; et, poussé par l'amour et par la gloire, il résolut de voir sur-le-champ ce qu'il en était. A peine s'avança-t-il vers le bois, que tous ces grands arbres, ces ronces et ces épines s'écartèrent d'eux-mêmes pour le laisser passer. Il marche vers le château qu'il voyait au bout d'une grande avenue où il entra ; et, ce qui le surprit un peu, il vit que personne de ses gens n'avait pu le suivre parce que les arbres s'étaient rapprochés dès qu'il en passa. Il ne laissa pas de continuer son chemin : un prince jeune et amoureux est toujours vaillant. Il entra dans une grande avant-cour, où tout ce qu'il vit d'abord était capable de le glacer de crainte. C'était un silence affreux ; l'image de la mort s'y présentait partout ; et ce n'étaient que des corps étendus d'hommes et d'animaux qui paraissaient morts. Il reconnut pourtant bien au nez bourgeonné et à la face vermeille des suisses, qu'ils n'étaient qu'endormis : et leurs tasses, où il y avait encore quelques

gouttes de vin, montraient assez qu'ils s'étaient endormis en buvant. Il passa dans une grande cour pavée de marbre: il monte l'escalier; il entre dans la salle des gardes, qui étaient rangés en haie la carabine sur l'épaule, et ronflant de leur mieux. Il traverse plusieurs chambres pleines des gentilshommes et de dames dormant tous, les uns debout, les autres assis. Il entre dans une chambre toute dorée; et il vit sur un lit, dont les rideaux étaient ouverts de tous côtés, le plus beau spectacle qu'il eût jamais vu, une princesse qui paraissait avoir quinze ou seize ans, et dont l'éclat resplendissant avait quelque chose de lumineux et de divin. Il s'approcha en tremblant et en admirant, et se mit à genoux auprès d'elle. Alors, comme la fin de l'enchantement était venue, la princesse s'éveilla; et, le regardant avec des yeux plus tendres qu'une première vue ne semblait le permettre: Est-ce vous, mon prince? lui dit-elle; vous vous êtes bien fait attendre. Le prince, charmé de ces paroles, et plus encore de la manière dont elles étaient dites, ne savait comment lui témoigner sa joie et sa reconnaissance; il l'assura qu'il l'aimait plus que lui-même. Ses discours furent mal rangés; ils en plurent davantage. Il était plus embarrassé qu'elle, et l'on ne doit pas s'en étonner: elle avait eu le temps de songer à ce qu'elle aurait à lui dire; car il y a apparence (l'histoire n'en dit pourtant rien) que la bonne fée, pendant un si long sommeil, lui avait procuré le plaisir des songes agréables. Enfin il y avait quatre heures qu'ils se parlaient, et ils ne s'étaient pas encore dit la moitié des choses qu'ils avaient à se dire.

Cependant tout le palais s'était réveillé avec la princesse; chacun songeait à faire sa charge; et, comme ils n'étaient pas tous amoureux, ils mouraient de faim. La dame d'honneur, pressée, comme les autres, s'impatiente, et dit tout haut à la princesse que la viande était servie. Le prince aida la princesse à se lever: elle était tout habillée, et fort magnifiquement: mais il se garda bien de lui dire qu'elle était habillée comme sa mère-grand, et qu'elle avait un collet monté: elle n'en était pas moins belle. Ils passèrent dans un salon de miroirs, et y soupèrent servis par les officiers de la princesse. Les violons et les hautbois jouèrent de vieilles pièces, mais excellentes, quoiqu'il y eût plus de cent ans qu'on ne les jouait plus, et après souper, sans perdre de temps, la grand aumônier les maria dans la chapelle du château.

8. "A summer crisp with shining woods," these words and all the context suggest the analogy between the poet's love for Lady Flora, and the Prince's love for the Sleeping Beauty.

16. "A crimson . . . Macaw." Tennyson takes an interest in artistic trifles of this feminine sort. Is "quaint" satirical.

54. "The Oriel." From the same root as *oriental*, eastern.

71, 72. Tennyson has this trick of symbolism.

157. "Pardy." Par Dieu.

170. "Purple rim," horizon.

205, 212. How like, yet in the last two lines, how unlike, Wordsworth.

235. "Quinquenniads," periods of five years.

261, 262. Which all too introspective, still remains unconscious of a lover.

275, 280. The vagueness of the two figures denotes that the lover is delicately suggesting that the lady regard his poem as a thing of beauty without utilitarian meaning, or as a thing of beauty attended by love. Both figures dwell on the idea of not condescending to touch the earth.



## THE BROOK.

Reading Tennyson's English Idylls, such as *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Talking Oak*, *Dora*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Brook*, one feels that these are the works of Tennyson as he was, without his classics, his history, above all, his poetical masters. In these poems we find his exquisite gift for making lyrics, his fine, artistic, unimpassioned penciling of female figure and expression, his appreciation of the picturesque in an English landscape. Also we find as much development of dramatic imagination as seems suited to his temperament with his known habits and in his known environments; he knows the ways and views and, to some extent, the minds and hearts of English people of a class which he was able to observe. These poems have a charm for English people which cannot be fully sympathized in by readers of American birth. Mr. Tainsh finds *The May Queen* worthy of the most affectionate praise, though it is probable that most readers not English would find it somewhat namby-pamby.

All these idylls are of a simplicity of thought and sentiment which makes them popular; they are like much of Wordsworth's poetry in their trick of lending the glamour of poetry to the commonplace, but they lack some of the sincere love and respect for the lower class which we find in *The Solitary Reaper*, *Resolution and Independence*, *The Reverie of Poor Susan*, *Expostulation and Reply*, and *The Excursion*.

*The Brook* is an excellent type of the English Idylls. There is a background of aristocratic culture and condescension to the picture of rural simplicity which the poet draws so kindly and graciously. The quarrel between James and Katie is patched up by the narrator at some little cost of suffering from the garburity of old Philip. The country girl gains the admiration of the poet by being meek and not coarse, and by having a charming figure, eyes and hair. It is all very pretty and idyllic, but

it is somewhat conventional and somewhat different from the hearty warmth of Burns or the fatherly and brotherly love of Wordsworth.

But it is impossible to withhold the fullest enthusiasm upon thinking of the beauty of the lyric which appears here and there in the pastoral, as a veritable brook appears here and there in a meadow. The lightness, the brightness, the innocent music, the perfection of loving observation and lovely fancy, the haunting charm, at once remote and explicable, cheerful and pathetic, artless and infinitely calculated, make the song a thing of beauty and a joy forever. It is a song for an Isaac Walton to murmur as he angles, a dream for a summer afternoon when one lies in the meadow, sees banks of clouds and sky through green leaves, smells clover and timothy, and hears birds, grasshoppers and the brook.

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1. "We parted." Lawrence Aylmer had had a brother Edmund, a poet and the author of the lyric which threads this story. Twenty years before this the brothers had said farewell at this brook, Edmund going to Italy, where he soon died, Lawrence to India, from which land he has just now returned. As he sees the old, well-remembered neighbourhood he is filled with that most pathetic feeling for "the light of other days"; he recounts the incident which is most conspicuously associated in his mind with the farm before him. At the conclusion of his musings he meets the daughter of the Katie Willows he had known. James and Katie Willows had been married, had gone to Australia, and acquired enough to return and buy the old farm which they had formerly rented.

The central idea is that life is full of vicissitudes and that in middle life there is a strange pathos arising from the consideration of the changes worked by death and distance and the hand of time: Nature is less subject to change, and the song of the little rill is cheerful or morbidly sad according to the mood of the listener.

**7, 8.** Can give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

**36.** Observe that there is an organic connection between the song and the story, here and elsewhere.

**82.** Could any tune be more in keeping with the scene and circumstance?

**93, 95.** What a trenchant criticism of the trash that is inundating this generation.

## THE VOYAGE.

To persons not endowed with poetic genius it is not the least of the poet's great qualities that he knows so well what form any particular poetic idea he may wish to express should take on. If it were given as a problem to find just the best *poetic form*, this term being used in its broad, and in its narrower metrical sense, in which the ideas of *The Voyage* should be expressed, many men might give many opinions; it may be blind worship, but it seems to us that Tennyson has given the best answer. This matter of *form*, is one which the reader can hardly dwell upon to excess, yet he will always find that his attitude towards the great poets in this respect must be one of admiration rather than of logical appreciation.

The simple feelings are best expressed in simple metres; these iambic tetrameters rhyming alternately, are the very simplest form of verse, the ballad metre itself is not more primitive. The stanzas are of eight rather than of four verses, because as usual Tennyson finds a quatrain rather too limited for descriptive writing. Holmes tells us of the joy of a poet when a lyrical conception moves his heart; the form of that conception must be more or less spontaneous and instinctive as well. We can imagine this poem written in quatrains or varied by different rhyme arrangements or occasional trimeters, and yet not losing its identity; but the general form of a lively lyric of about a hundred lines seems to be not an accident or a matter of choice but the inevitable expression of the poetic conception under treatment. There is perhaps room for a special study of *poetic forms* in their relation to material, but it is probably best that each reader should acquire his ideas by liberal induction in the course of reading.

Of the two stanzas of *The Voyage* the first seven might be taken as a glorification of actual sailing. To a nation like the English this kind of poetry is ever welcome, and we are not

surprised to hear the English critics praise the beauty of this delightful poem, while placing much emphasis upon the surface meaning of it. Yet the figure of sailing is in reality the concrete method of expressing a certain way of taking life, hence the piece is distinctly a poem within the meaning of the Arnold definition. In the eighth stanza his weightier meaning begins to reveal itself plainly, and in the tenth it is slightly obtruded. Nearly all critics profess a dislike of didactic poetry, but in reality it is only when the teaching is obtrusive, dogmatic, eccentric, or platitudinous that it is inartistic; the greatest charm to many in Shakespeare's plays is that they are psychologically didactic: yet everybody praises them on this very score, because the teaching is so wonderfully unobtrusive that the reader imagines he himself discovers what the poet has to tell him.

*The Voyage* is a glorification of a life of poetic idealism. Joy, hope, progress, the pursuit of beauty, which in the poetic mind is the same as virtue and truth, are the life of the poet; those who live this life are happy in it, undaunted in death, and ready to "greet the unseen with a cheer."\*

Contrasted with these are the mere utilitarians who are soon overwhelmed in disgust, cynicism, despair.

The poem is full of brightness and youthfulness, and there is just enough of shadow in it to give proof of mature wisdom and to heighten the effect.

The poet's idealism is certainly his strength; however thoughtful and even gloomy he may be at times when considering things as they are, he gives expression again and again to the wisdom of following "the gleam," and to moderate confidence in the coming of a larger and happier race.

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\* Browning's *Epilogue*.

1. This poem reminds one of the *Ancient Mariner* :

“ The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.”

11. The figure-head of the ship representing the Virgin.  
12. *sheered*. Cleft, cut through.  
14. *run*. A nautical term for a ship's progress.  
16. In this pursuit of the Ideal they hope to accomplish unheard-of results.

18. *the threshold of the night*,—the west.

19. Sink below the horizon line where the track of sunlit waters begins.

31-2. A *boss* is a bright protuberant ornament ; the *halo* is the circle of duskier light about the moon. The moon is the silver boss of that shield of which her halo is the circumference.

37. The course is south and then east.

40. The islands of the Eastern Archipelago, which abound in spices.

44. *sable pine*. At the time of the destruction of Pompeii the smoke and ashes rising from Vesuvius was said to take the form of a pine tree.

51-2. These lines describe the phosphorescent light seen at times on the sea ; occasionally it covered the whole surface, and then again showed only in the ship's wake.

56. Those who follow the Ideal are not drawn aside by the pleasures of the moment.

57. *one fair Vision*,—the Ideal.

62. The face receded with the horizon.

65-72. At times the Ideal is followed without our having anything more than a feeling for it ; at times it appeals to us under the guise of Beauty ; again more definitely as Virtue, or Knowledge ; again we are led on by the Hope of an ideal future life ; or by the prospect of an ideal social and political condition.

69. *idly*, because hope of immortality drove out all fear.

71. the bloodless blade reversed. Freedom's sword is unstained with blood and is turned back in sign of peace. See *The Poet*—

“There was no blood upon her maiden robes.”

“No sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd.”

73. And only one,—the ubiquitous prosaic man.

83. The Idealist accepts all that nature can give him, but scorns the restraints a logical science seems to impose; he finds himself carried by his faith in the Ideal over difficulties insurmountable to the purely logical mind.

87. the whirlwind's heart of peace, that spot round which the storm sweeps and which remains calm.

95, 96. This echo of lines 7-8 is particularly effective; death and old age and suffering do not abate the ardour of the Idealist.

## THE HOLY GRAIL.

*The Holy Grail* occupies the eighth place in the *Idylls of the King*. The tales of ten of these poems are narrated as by the poet in his own person, the *Passing of Arthur* is put in the mouth of Sir Bedivere, while the story of the quest of the Holy Grail takes the form of a dialogue carried on between an old monk, Ambrose, and Sir Percivale, in the garden of an abbey to which the knight had retired immediately after the enterprise. This setting, which Tennyson himself devised for the tale, adds an extra dramatic interest and relieves him of telling with an air of belief a story of miracles. Percivale relates how he and Galahad and many other fellows of the Round Table set out in search of the Holy Grail, the sacred cup out of which our Lord and his disciples drank at the Last Supper. This quest is undertaken when the influences of good are on the wane at Camelot. It is an attempt on the part of the knights led by a few worthy heroes to recover lost ground and by one enthusiastic effort to lay hold of spiritual excellence. The king is not in sympathy with the enterprise and thinking that it is in pursuing their work they should rise to visions and faith he prophesies a disastrous failure. Galahad and Percivale succeed, for the pure in heart have clear spiritual discernment. The honest sympathetic Sir Bors also sees the vision, and Lancelot is rewarded with partial success. But the quest proves disastrous for the Round Table; Galahad is rapt away to the spiritual city, many do not return, some are rendered more faithless and reckless than before, and Percivale retires from a life of activity to a life of devotion. The king's prophecy is fulfilled, though some have indeed succeeded. The condition of success seems to be that the hero should lose himself to find himself; Galahad is immediately triumphant, through natural purity of heart; Percivale learns step by step the lesson of humility and self-obliviation; Sir Bors loses his



selfishness in a burst of generous sympathy; Lancelot gains a clearer vision in striving to cast aside his sin.

The sublime subject, the employment of a discreet and lofty diction, and the exercise of a chastened power of imagination render *The Holy Grail* one of the finest of Tennyson's poems.

**2. Percivale.** A Celtic name from *Per*, dish, and *cyfaill*, *Keral*, companion, meaning companion of the Dish, or Grail.

**7. Camelot.** Arthur's seat, is supposed to have been in Somerset at a place now called Queen-Camel.

**9. Ambrosius.** This old monk is a creation of Tennyson's. His character serves to emphasize that of Percivale.

**14, 15.** These lines are a fine illustration of Tennyson's descriptive powers. The *smoke* is the pollen dust.

**22, 23.** Note the graceful parenthesis characteristic of Tennyson.

**29.** Was the old monk hoping for a love story?

**34, 35.** Compare the spirit of "women watch who wins, who falls" and Milton's lines,—

"With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit or arms."

**38, 39.** The monk trusts they are full of life as regards spiritual things, but they are certainly too dead to the world.

**40.** This knight proves to have been Sir Bors.

**45, 46.** What is the tone of Percivale's answer?

**48. Aromat. Arimathaea.** It was not however a *land*, but a town near Jerusalem.

**50. Moriah.** The hill in Jerusalem on which the temple stood.

**52. Glastonbury,** founded according to tradition by Joseph of Arimathaea in 63 A.D., is in Somersetshire on a peninsula formed by the river Brue. The "winter thorn" is a kind of hawthorn believed to have grown from Joseph's staff.

61. **Arviragus.** Said to have reigned in Britain 28 years, from 14 to 72 A.D.

68, 69. Does Percivale's way of speaking about his sister strike you as remarkable?

72. Note the echoing repetition characteristic of Tennyson.

79. **Table Round.**—Arthur's knights who were bound by the king to certain vows, as told in *Guinevere* 456 *et seq.* The knights of the round table were so called because they gathered about a round table formed by Merlin as an emblem of the round world, and capable of seating one hundred and fifty.

82. Does *beat* here mean *strike* or *pulsate*?

91. "Surely he had thought, etc." Examine the context and say whether this is the indirect forms of narration for "I surely thought," etc.

101, 105. What is the effect of the repetitions in these lines?

108, 115. How is the description of the music made awe-inspiring?

118. "Rose-red with beatings in it." This suggests the pulsation of the sacrificial blood.

121, 124. What are the merits of this description of the vanishing of the Grail?

125. Percivale's sister speaks in the eager tone of a devotee.

129. "The pale ruin" He loses sight of her sisterly character in her religious.

135. **Galahad** was according to some stories the chief figure in the quest of the Holy Grail. He is too ideal a character to rouse a thoroughly human interest. Percivale is therefore again made the leading character in the tale.

141. The white-armoured knight was of a spirit prepared for the vision.

143, 148. In this stanza Tennyson puts by a mass of conjecture, detailed in the old stories concerning Lancelot's birth. He retains the idea of mystery.

146, 147. "Like birds of passage piping up and down, that gape for flies." This implies that the *chatterers* idly disseminate and receive reports not worth consideration.

149, 165. **Malory** writes: "And there she opened a box, and took out girdles which were seemingly wrought with golden threads, and upon that were set full rich stones, and a rich buckle of gold, To

lords, said she, here is a girdle that ought to be set about the sword. And wit ye well the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well while that I was a woman of the world. But as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair and made this girdle in the name of God. Then went the gentlewoman and set it on the girdle of the sword. And then she girt him about the middle with the sword: Now reck I not though I die, for now I hold me one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made the worthiest knight of the world. Damsel, said Galahad, ye have done so much that I shall be your knight all the days of my life."

Compare Tennyson's stanza with this passage. The alchemy of art has turned poetic material into poetry.

166. "Then came a year of miracle." What is the relation of this statement to the succeeding context?

168. Merlin is the enchanter and bard in the *Idylls of the King*. He represents intellectual power. According to tradition he was, like Scott's Brian, the son of a demon. See the Idyll *Merlin and Vivien*.

172. The Siege perilous. *Siege* is the French for seat. According to one story this was the seat in which Christ had sat.

178. Galahad solved the riddle of the Siege perilous and proved his fitness to see the Grail.

182. 194. Compare this coming of the Grail with the coming to Percivale's sister.

187. "Covered with a luminous cloud." The Grail itself was not seen by the knights except Galahad.

200. Sir Bors was Lancelot's nephew (*cousin* here means kinsman) noted for his devotion to his uncle.

201. Lancelot. Arthur's chief knight. The name is of Latin origin, old French *ancel*, a servant, Latin *ancilla*. Nearly all the names of the Idylls are of Celtic derivation.

202. Gawain son of Lot and Bellicent of Orkney, and brother of Modred and Gareth. In some of the accounts he played an important part in the quest, but in accordance with the light and irreverent character ascribed to him by Malory and Tennyson, in the Holy Grail he is represented as speaking loudly and accomplishing little.

204. Does old Ambrosius suspect that the clear judgment of the king will not approve this visionary quest?

209, 215. This passage seems to be in a slightly different tone from the rest of the poem. The king, righting a definite individual wrong, forms a striking contrast to the knights seeking some vague spiritual good, and the description is richer and less of a clear white than other portions of the poem.

216. Was it that the king with a mind kept clear by action saw what truly had occurred at Camelot, or that after the accomplishment of a good work he was blest with a vision also?

225, 226. "Had you known" etc., 'would that you had known.'

228. "The dim rich city." This expression is frequently applied to Camelot in the Idylls. What is the full significance of it?

234, 237. These four zones represent four stages of individual or race progress. In the first stage the good is overcome of evil; in the second the evil is overcome of the good; in the third the good having conquered stands firm; in the fourth the good aspires to loftier achievement.

240. "pointed to the Northern Star." The Northern Star is the emblem of constancy and the Great Bear, Arthur's constellation, moves round it. "Pointed" is a perfect participle modifying wings; it is difficult to reconcile the wings pointed northward, with the statue fronting eastward.

247. "blazon Arthur's wars," represent pictorially Arthur's twelve battles in which he overcame the heathen hordes. Are these windows on the north and south of the hall?

253. Arthur's finding of Excalibur is described in *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 294-309. *Excalibur*, the name of Arthur's magic sword, means "cut-steel"; it is of Celtic origin.

254. The west window is reserved for the passing of Arthur.

258. What is the connection of this line with the preceding context?

263. "The golden dragon." At the death of Vortigern, a dragon appeared in the sky, whereupon Merlin declared Uther would be king. Uther (through whom Arthur became king) after his victory, had two dragons made of gold; one he dedicated to Heaven, the other was borne at the head of his army. This is the origin of the name Pen (head) Dragon. The Golden Dragon became the symbol of sovereignty and was worn by Arthur as a crest.

264. "the hold,"—the bandit hold that Arthur had gone to sack,

**265, 270.** Note the picture of the meeting of men of action and the visionaries in the presence of the king.

**270.** Does *protesting* mean declaring their willingness to follow the quest or expressing incredulity of what is told them?

**275. Darken.** This repetition is characteristic of Tennyson and is a device to gain emphasis. Ending the proposition with the first word in the line is also characteristic. Do these devices produce a good effect in this instance?

**278.** What is the tone of the king's "Yea, yea."

**280.** What does "nay" take exception to?

**285.** "therefore have we sworn" Arthur's inquiries bring out the visionariness of the quest.

**287.** This line is an allusion to the gospel of Mathew 11, 7. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see"? Do they go out for any definite purpose or simply to pursue a shadow?

**289.** "Shrilling along the hall." Galahad called out in youthful, eager, and enthusiastic tones.

**298.** "that follow but the leader's bell." The king severely compares them to cattle following the leader without consideration. Is "ye" a nominative of address or appositive to "ye" 305?

**300. Taliessin.** The most famous of the ancient Welsh bards: he is supposed to have lived about 500 A.D.

**304. Unproven.**—before his strength and knightly skill are tested.

**305.** "he learns." The construction is here broken off to indicate the vehemence of the king's speech.

**310.** "the sudden heads of violence"—sudden and violent uprisings. *To make head* in the Idylls is to unite rebellious forces.

**312.** The *White Horse* signifies the Saxons; it was the emblem on the banner of Hengist. The value of these lines is heightened if they contain an allusion to Shelley's,

"Last came Anarchy,—he rode  
On a white horse splash'd with blood."

**313.** Compare with line 301.

**319.** "wandering fires." The *ignis fatuus* is a light that sometimes plays over low swampy land and misleads the traveller.

**328.** This form of expression is frequently used in the Idylls to describe the sunrise. To repeat in this way is characteristic of the epic.

It is supposed by some that the rhapsodists made use of these stereotyped lines while recuperating their powers for a renewed effort.

331. Instead of the dash we might write "were that." What is gained by the broken construction?

333, 334. "for a strength was in us from the vision." Had Percivale seen more than the other knights?

339. "had you known." "I would that you had known."

342. What is the force of the connective "for"?

347. The figures of dragons were used to support the galleries.

350. **wyvern.** "A monster of the dragon order, but having only two legs and feet; it has wings, and a serpent-like tail, nowed [tied in a knot] and barbed."

**griffin.** In the fore part represented as an eagle, in the hinder part as a lion.

358. **Gate of the three Queens.** This entrance to Camelot is described in the twelfth stanza of *Gareth and Lynette*.

359. "rendered mystically." The battles were represented partly as physical conflicts, partly as struggles of a more spiritual character.

366. "For all my blood danced in me." Nature appears beautiful to Percivale because he feels sanguine of success.

370. A sudden cloud is lightly suggested by the poet in the expression "a driving gloom."

371, 373. Tennyson in these characteristic lines follows the familiar summation of man's being, "thought, word and deed."

374. All faults stand against his success, because it is the pure in heart that see things spiritual.

376, 377. Compare these lines with Coleridge's description of the Ancient Mariner alone on the sea.

381, 382. "where the crisping white played ever back upon the sloping wave." This is a very fine descriptive touch. *Crisping*—curling.

388. "The goodly apples." *Goodly* means of promising appearance. These apples, representing the pleasures of sense, turned to ashes on the lips, like Dead-sea apples.

395. "As who should say." This is an old literary expression equivalent to "as one would do who should (meant to) say."

398, 399. "A broken shed and in it a dead babe." These words give a heartrending suggestion of shattered domestic happiness.

409. "Then I was ware of one" etc. Is this fame or wealth?

426. Notice the variations in this refrain.

423. "incredible pinnacles,"—a bold expression for "pinnacles of an incredible height."

427. Percivale is glad at the prospect of ruling for good his fellow men. But his generation will pass away and his name and influence come to nothing.

438. "Fell into dust," etc. This reminds us of *Ecclesiastes*. "This also is vanity;" there is in this refrain the same mournful reiteration of lost hope.

440. "dropt." This word powerfully suggests the change of feeling from a sense of exaltation to one of utter abasement. This effect is helped out by the repetition of the root "low," the use of open vowels, the use of the weak consonant *h*. There is a noticeable *hiatus* in more than one of these lines.

452. "like a flying star,"—"in the likeness of a flying star."

458. Scan this line and note its merits, metrical and other.

461. "slaked my burning thirst." "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever."

462. "sacring,"—consecration (O. E. *sacren*, Fr. *sacerer*). This expression is used by Malory.

466, 467. This circumstance is also told in the *Morte D'Arthur* of Malory.

472. The night-season for more reasons than one has by all men been considered the time for seeing visions.

473. Tennyson's lyric, *Sir Galahad*, should be read in connection with this part of the *Holy Grail*. Compare this line with

'As down dark tides the glory slides.'

The emphatic repetition of "blood-red" is to be noted.

479. "clash'd," joined fiercely in conflict.

480, 484. These lines are markedly scriptural in their phraseology.

482. Percivale's sister had said, "till one will crown thee King far in the spiritual city," 161-2.

485, 487. Percivale's sister exercised a similar influence on Galahad; see 163-166. This description of the influence of mind upon mind is powerful and touches the mysterious. One man's faith is active in kindling another man's.

492, 493. "for every moment glanced His silver arms and gloomed." This is very telling in its sound and picturesque effect.

499. "A great black swamp." The Valley of Death.

502, 503. "linked with many a bridge a thousand piers." The supports were joined by a thousand arches.

507. Note the three visions in the lightning flashes: "and first" (509), "and when the heavens opened and blazed again" (516), "Then in a moment they blazed again" (523).

516. The view becomes less definite. Note the artful haziness of this line.

522. "For now I knew" etc. This is why this vision is a joy to Percivale.

529. "Strike from the sea." Stand out from the sea sharply and brightly.

538. "Glad....more." This refers to the hermit to whom he had told his *phantoms* (444).

539. The gate of Arthur's wars is the same as the Gate of the three Queen's (358).

540. This homely speech by Ambrosius is an excellent dramatic offset to Percivale's ecstatic utterance. The monk's sentences are disjointed, loosely colloquial.

541. "And....thee," 'and they would engross your attention.'

548. This is a whimsical but strikingly appropriate and picturesque comparison.

551. This line comes from the old pastor with a *naïve* force. He did for his flock with unconscious benevolence what duty would demand of him.

559. "Rejoice" is coördinate with "delight" 553.

563. Ambrosius persists in the term "phantom" in spite of Percivale's protest (45-6). He finds a lack of personal interest in Percivale's tale of the quest.

569. "Eft"—newt.



572. This temptation to give up the quest is not told by Percivale in the first place. It does not rank with the "phantoms"; it is not symbolic, but real.

580. Under the influence of the old monk's personality, Percivale's subject matter has changed, and the style of his narration has become simpler and less *sustained*.

597. Arthur's warning does not here produce a sense of despair as formerly (378) but only deadens the knight's desire.

606, 607. Alas! it was a severe temptation; nevertheless desire to keep my vow roused me one night so that I rose and fled.

612. "yule," Christmas.

625. Complete the statement which Ambrosius here breaks off.

627. The monk thinks he speaks too earthlywise for one who knew so little of the world.

628. "earth," burrow.

629, 630. "despite all fast and penance." Devotion in the case of Ambrosius did not bring the power to see visions. This suggests a comparison between him and Percivale's sister. Asceticism does not seem equally productive of good results in all cases.

633. "pelican." This crest was symbolic of the unselfishness of Sir Bors: the pelican was said to feed its young with blood from its own breast.

637. "Where is he?" This question shows how absorbed Sir Bors has been in solicitude for his great kinsman.

639. "maddening what he rode," spurring his horse to a frenzy.

642. "The slothful man says, there is a lion in the way." *Proverbs* 26, 13.

643. The verb in this line is emphatic. Lancelot now roused to a sense of duty recognizes his former sin and indifference as foes to his welfare. See line 814.

646. "his former madness." According to Malory, Lancelot was mad for two years because of Guinevere's anger against him on account of Elaine, whom she thought he loved.

652. "The Holy Cup of healing." The Holy Grail had power to cure both physical and spiritual ailments. See lines 54-56.

653. Being so absorbed in sympathy for Lancelot.

660. These were Celtic people who had remained in the faith of the Druids. *Paynim* here means pagan, *paynimrie*, however, corresponds in meaning to Christendom, and *payanism* to Christianity. Druid remains, like Stonehenge, consist of large stones placed upright and in circles, other stones being placed horizontally on the upright ones.

664. Cæsar in the *Bellum Gallicum*, 6, 14, says of the Druids, "they have much to say, moreover, concerning the stars and their movements."

666. Compare Arthur's attitude towards the quest with that of the Druids.

667. Are these words spoken by the Druids or Sir Bors? If by the former the lines describe the sun and its offices; if by the latter they are to be compared with Wordsworth's lines in *Tintern Abbey*.

670, 672. There is a scriptural tone about the phraseology of these lines.

679. "scud," loose vapoury clouds driven swiftly by the wind.

681. This is the constellation called the Great Bear. A Celtic demi-god Arthur (Arcturus) was the presiding genius of this group according to the Britons.

689, 693. This description is more subdued than the other visions of the Holy Grail. Sir Bors' earnestness, simplicity and humility account for this fact. See line 755-6. There is an appropriateness in this knight's seeing the vision "across the seven clear stars," for he sees the Grail not when he is seeking it but while serving his fellow-men. According to Arthur the sanest enthusiasm is that which rises in the performance of duty.

698. See line 42.

700. "His eyes . . smiled with his lips." This is said by physiognomists to be a sign of sincerity. Ambrosius makes a characteristic and valuable contribution to the description of Sir Bors. Is there any dramatic impropriety in the old monk's describing Sir Bors to Percivale?

711. "Do not go in one ear and out of the other, but remain fixed in the mind." Percivale reports verbatim much that was said by Lancelot, Arthur and others.

714, 716. These ruins were the result of the storm mentioned in 726-7. The broken stone decorations were lying in the street. "Unicorn, a fabulous beast resembling the horse, but with one long horn projecting from the forehead. Basilisk, like the wyvern (see note on line 350), having a dragon's head at the end of the tail. Cockatrice,

an imaginary, fabulous creature, half fowl and half reptile, similar to the wyvern, but combed, etc., like the cock. Talbot, a sort of hunting dog, between a hound and a beagle, with a large nose, long, round and thick ears."

723. Derive "welfare" and tell its value here.

730. The golden wings had been pointed to the northern star and, so pointing, symbolized fixity of purpose, but this quest was a perversion of the aims of the Round Table.

732. This line is an echo from the first part of the poem (51-52). This recurrence warns us that we approach the conclusion of the tale.

735. "Quiet life." See line 4.

736. Arthur disapproves of Percivale's intention.

739. He sought the saintly man in order to have his opinion of his own unfitness confirmed.

741. This line with its repetition expresses admirably the weariness a frivolous man feels in a serious pursuit.

744. Tenting-pin. The stake to which the tent-guys are fastened.

747. Gawain was only a little put out by this storm that had brought calamity to the Round Table. He regretted the interference with his pleasures.

755. Note how artfully Tennyson avoids repeating the account of these adventures. It seems natural for Sir Bors to be thus brief in the presence of the King and Knights and in the excitement of meeting again with Lancelot. See how Percivale passes over the relation of his own story (733).

756. "And the tears were in his eyes." Sir Bors is thrilled by a memory.

759. The reference to the Gospel of John ii. 1-10.

763. "Our mightiest." Lancelot echoes the King's words ironically, being filled with the sense of his own unworthiness.

766. "If friend of thine I be." He is conscience-stricken over his unfaithfulness to the King, and can scarcely endure to hear Arthur call him friend.

767. "Welter," roll. *Wallow* is cognate synonymous verb.

769. See *Lancelot and Elaine* (244).

773. "Each as each." Each was so like the other, and they were so entwined, that it was impossible to distinguish them.

779, 780. Lancelot thought, if he could see the Grail, the flower and the weed might be plucked asunder, but the holy saint told him that unless they were first plucked asunder he could not see the Grail.

782, 784. The *Idylls of the King*, according to Tennyson, treat of Soul at war with Sense. Lancelot never entirely yielded himself to his love for Guinevere, and yet was never perfectly clear in his devotion to the King. In him, therefore, this conflict rages, till he becomes maddened. If Lancelot had gained a complete victory, the Round Table might still have been saved. This is the crisis of the epic.

786. He was easily overcome because of the inward conflict. He was divided against himself.

795. Compare *Locksley Hall* (6) :

“And the hollow ocean *ridges* roaring into cataracts.”

802, 803. Lancelot is madly willing to lose himself to save himself, and so is successful (partly) in the quest.

808. “**shingle**,” round, water-worn, and loose gravel and pebbles. The word is said to be from the same root as *sing*.

810. **Carbonek**. According to the tradition this castle was built as the resting place of the Holy Grail ; it was in the “*Terre Forraine*.”

811. Note how wonderfully simple yet striking is the description of Carbonek.

812. “**chasm-like**,” like rude clefts in the rock.

814. See line 643. Lancelot's former slothfulness and sin now appeared to him as impediments to his success.

817. “**sudden-flaring**,” ‘suddenly up-flying ;’ *flaring* suggests the comparison of the manes to fire blazing up.

820. If he hesitated he would be overcome by a sense of unworthiness. Faith is necessary.

827, 828. These lines suggest peace after conflict. *An oriel* is a large window projecting from a wall.

830, 832. Lancelot is drawn on by the charm of the heavenly and enlightened. He is filled with hope.

840. “**seven-times-heated furnace**.” A reference to the book of Daniel 3, 19.

“I” is without a verb ; Lancelot was about to state “I saw the Holy Grail,” but after saying that he had swooned away, he modifies the statement to “O, yet methought I saw.”

844. To others the Grail was concealed in white samite. Lancelot on account of his guilt saw it in crimson. Samite is rich silk embroidered.

854. Ambrosius is supposed here to express by some gesture his desire to hear what Gawain said.

858. "thine," thy quest. "My good friend Percivale" contains a patronizing sneer.

862. "Deaf as a white cat" is a proverb. Darwin in the *Origin of Species*, ch. i. P. 9, says, "Some instances of correlation are quite whimsical? thus cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf, but it has lately been pointed out by Mr. Tait that this is confined to the males." Another author says: "Albino human beings are also often deaf." Tennyson in his poems frequently displays similar minute knowledge of scientific fact.

863. This frivolous speech of Gawain's forms a striking contrast to Lancelot's account of his terrible quest.

871. Percivale's vision was the most perfect; for he saw the Grail leading on to the spiritual city. Sir Bors had seen it, but as a soberer and less ecstatic vision than Percivale's. Lancelot could scarcely claim to have seen, and yet he was infinitely better off than Sir Gawain.

875. In old times God's truth found utterance through the harps of the Seers, and was necessarily affected by the medium through which it passed; so these knights had given true accounts of the Grail as it was to them. "The framework and the chord," the stringed instrument of the bard.

877. The king begins to express the thoughts that had kept him silent when Gawain had broken in with his irreverent levity.

881. See 777-8.

893. "Another hath," Percivale.

898. Galahad was to be crowned in the spiritual city.

899. This is a reference to Percivale's bold speech, 277-8.

901. The king though no despiser of visions regards work in the allotted field the paramount duty.

906. Visions of night coming in the hours of contemplation, or visions of the day that come even in the midst of labour.

911. The ellipsis is "are not hand and foot but vision." Only his spirit is then felt to exist.

915. The knights, lured by a suggestion of the spiritual, followed it up and according to their insight they saw what they called a vision. The king pursued his work and came to regard what they termed the real as the visionary, while the great realities to him became spiritual things, God, Christ, and his own soul. His insight was greater than theirs. They had seen visions ; he had seen truth.

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12/2/50

